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v. 10 #1, July '53*

THE MONTH

JANUARY 1953

NEWMAN AGAIN

SIR SHANE LESLIE

CHARLES WILLIAMS

A Heresy Hunt

H. D. HANSHELL

THE EARL AND THE ALCHEMIST—I

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The Month is edited from 114 Mount Street, W.1, GROsvenor 2995, and published by Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 6 & 7 Clifford Street, London, W.1. Subscriptions may be addressed to any bookseller, or, in Great Britain, direct to the publishers; in U.S.A. to British Publications, Inc., 30 East 60th Street, New York 22, N.Y.; in France to W. H. Smith & Son, 248 Rue de Rivoli, Paris, 1. The annual subscription is 30s., U.S.A. \$5.

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LONGMANS

NEWMAN AGAIN¹

By

SIR SHANE LESLIE

THE OXFORD MOVEMENT appears to have been remotely drawn from the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and Cambridgeshire. At least, the Newmans (originally from the Fen county) intermarried with the Huguenots. Their background was that Evangelical movement which is now as remote and faded today as the Nonjurors or Jacobites.

Yet, as Mr. O'Faolain points out, there is no modern comparison with the relentless British Evangelicalism except Russian Communism. Today it is reduced to tracts, "a windy harmonium on the pier," and the Simeon Trustees. Once it blew away Slavery in its righteous stride, made the British Sunday, bred such fiery and effectual leaders as Wesley and Lord Shaftesbury, and unknowingly lit the lights of the Catholic Revival. From Evangelical homes came the Wilberforces, Mannings and Newmans. It is no use for historians to detail and describe the Oxford Movement as though it leaped like a sudden tornado into English life. It was merely one mighty gust out of the Evangelical hurricane. In so far as many Evangelicals became Catholics, to that extent England returned to the old Faith.

This is the motif which needs the next detailed study, if books on Oxford and Newman must continue to multiply. So much can be traced, explained and analysed if this continuity is accepted. The Catholic Revival was not an exotic, a foreign intrusion, an "Italian Mission," but a twist of a great national spirit. It was Exeter Hall planting herself amongst the old Abbeys of England.

There will be no end of the books written about Newman. Mr. O'Faolain has come along in hopes to "humanize the whole Newman legend": something between a genius and a "Blessed Nuisance" to his family. Research into the first is devoted to the Newmans, "an Evangelical household," which meant they were

¹ *Newman's Way*, by Sean O'Faolain (Longmans 25s).

Newman, by Louis Bouyer (Editions du Cerf 975 frs).

as separated from the Regency times around them as Lot from the Society of Sodom. We have genealogical tables and photographs of houses at Ham or Alton associated with Newman, and pictures of father, mother, brethren and sisters, in whose hearts as well as souls he took intense interest, as a chapter entitled "Vain Flirtations" shows. But what decipherment of old letters and approximation of forgotten initials is needed! A Newman Studies group would be of more value than those which grope through the allusions in *Finnegan's Wake*.

The fencing between Jemima and Harriett Newman over their admirers reads like Jane Austen. Mr. O'Faolain thinks that "no man was safe for a single moment with a Georgian female." A curiously vivid picture can be drawn from the letters of the Mozley family and the Autobiography of Maria Rosina Giberne, whose name as a convert to Newman and then to Rome figures in the Ward biography. She apparently had a passage of foils with Frank Newman, but she had the instinct (not the intelligence) to admire J. H. N., whom she found "cold-hearted, reserved and shy." Tom Mozley called her "the Prima Donna of the Oxford Movement." Mr. O'Faolain goes further in editorial style and passes her on as a "foolish Juno, gushing beauty." No more will be known until her Autobiography in French and English can be published. At present it lies at the Birmingham Oratory like lavender amid dry theology.

J. H. N. was eddied in all the badinage and whispery flirtation rippling around his sisters. He found greater calm in the controversies of the early Fathers than in these domestic excitements.

Newman brothers as well as sisters are revealed in all their odd contrast to their eldest. They all had to endure together chapters of life described as "Hard" and "Harder Times." J. H. N. worked and paid for Frank's education. Their father passed from failure to failure, and was finally sold up as a bankrupt. The household goods were scattered in spite of a vain effort to save J. H. N.'s music. "They bid too low and lost it. Jemima wept bitterly that night at dinner." Fifty years later the music was recognized and bought by a "fan" who returned it to the celebrated Dr. Newman. Did he remember the sorrows of those days? Mr. O'Faolain thinks he shuffled when he wrote: "How can I answer for a boy's negligences fifty years ago?" For a time the Newmans lived anywhere. Mr. O'Faolain has traced and photographed their genteel

homes at Grey Court House, Ham, and in the street at Alton, but it is in Dickens that we must find the picture of their mean dwelling in Covent Garden, for York Street covers the plague-ridden spot where the great novelist buried Lady Dedlock's lover. Close by lived the Newmans, with De Quincey for neighbour. "Did John and he ever meet and talk over a dram about their dreams?" And other delvers in the forgotten, invisible shreds of great men's lives have asked whether Newman as a boy ever played with Disraeli in Bloomsbury? This was more likely than that he should have shared in the *Confessions of an Opium-eater*. He himself would have remembered.

It is Mr. O'Faolain's search for the unknown and concealed which makes this the most fascinating if not most edifying book ever written on the subject. We like to know that the creditors discussed whether to return Newman's mother her cheap bangles and ornaments, though like the mother of the Gracchi she must have realized what were the real ornaments of her home. But the music-book—lost for half a century—what pilgrim to Edgbaston would not weep if they saw it hung up with the fiddle and the Hat if they too have survived? *Sunt lacrimae rerum*.

The world has not heard much about Newman's brothers, but Mr. O'Faolain has worked like a detective and we learn how Frank became a Plymouth Brother and joined Lord Congleton in a rash mission to convert Moslems in the East. The Brethren were crudely primitive Christians founded as a sect by an Irish curate, Mr. Darby, who was narrow but unbigoted, for he upheld Catholic Emancipation. Lord Congleton was the head of the Parnells who were "mad" but in different strains of enthusiasm to the Newmans. Never did East and West fail more utterly to meet than when Frank Newman and Lord Congleton arrived at Aleppo with a mixed troupe of male and female missionaries. Some died of the plague. Frank Newman was brutally attacked by the mob, while Lord Congleton, after falling in love with the youngest lady in the party, comforted himself at her death with an Armenian widow. No wonder the mission to Baghdad proved a failure, but the story survives in Frank's letters.

It seems sad that none of Newman's brothers or sisters joined his faith. Jemima would not even allow her children to visit him in Edgbaston. Charles had become a clerk in the Bank of England, but eventually faded into an eccentric recluse at Tenby. It was

there that the Cardinal discovered him in 1882 to the astonishment of the Oratorians, who had no idea that he ever had a brother called Charles. Mr. O'Faolain like an unwearied collector of rare insects has recovered his traces. "One can only guess where Cottage No. 5 stood. There is the cry of the seagulls." There should have been a moving meeting between the brothers, but the only surviving trace is the tombstone which the Cardinal erected—and the local tradition that Charles refused to see John when he called. On the tombstone is the scroll—"*Domine, misericordia tua in saeculum opera manuum tuarum ne despicias.*" One can imagine the venerable scholar at Edgbaston selecting the words through his tears to diagnose his brother's futurity.

Frank survived John by seven years and his enthusiasm for religious missioning by many more. In his case the Evangelical fervour acted like cortisone. A few short months of violent revivalism were followed by collapse. Frank became an Agnostic and wrote memoirs as deprecating of his eminent brother as possible.

But there had been some correspondence and visits between them when they discussed neutral subjects such as Mixed Bathing or Vegetarianism, upon which no Church Councils have been known to reach uproar or decision. Frank had the "rag-bag mind" which made him "a caricature of the kind-hearted, ineffectual, agnostic, Liberal Englishman whom John least admired."

It was a pity that he threw so bitter a wreath on the Cardinal's tomb. Like all the Newmans he had striking features, "facial beauty that in his youth had been like a Greek gem," we are told, while Charles had been compared to an Olympian Jove, and the beauty of the Cardinal's face had fascinated the Victorian painters. It was the face which had launched a thousand conversions and which lurks behind Mr. O'Faolain's sketch of a "brave, kind, solitary, gifted, tormented angel."

Out of this chaotic, sentimental, middle-class family which has perished (as it deserved to perish by any rules of social selection) arose the greatest of Anglicans, the greatest of converts, one who is often reckoned the greatest of Victorians and sometimes even the greatest of Englishmen.

This is one of the puzzles of Biography, but it makes this volume one of extraordinary interest even when lack of taste

and discretion reveal so much which the Newmanites and Newman himself would have preferred unsaid. We learn that he carried out a little innocent suppression. He preferred that his father should have been recorded by profession as a "gentleman" not a grocer. He forgot the family bankruptcy. He bought and destroyed Charles' letters, described as "very questionable."

The fact was that both the Cardinals, Manning and Newman, had trouble with their Protestant relatives, though—unlike Newman—Manning was at least able to convert his brother Charles.

Biographers have remarked how little the Cardinals had in common. The great experience which they shared in life was the public bankruptcy of their fathers. Both parents had been sold up and made to surrender their keys. The effect upon their sons had been to turn thoughts more strongly in the direction of celestial riches. It was true that Newman "since childhood had been marked out for the cloister and the academy. He was not made for the hurly-burly." But Manning certainly was. Recall what a hurly-burly he made of the Vatican Council while Newman suffered agonies behind the scenes. Bankruptcy of parents was only the background, though a sobering one, to their Evangelical conversions, which were worked in Newman's case by the Rev. Mayors and in Manning's by Miss Bevan of Trent Park.

They never cared to be found in the same camp, much less to be labelled with the other's label. After all, Manning had been Captain of the Eleven at Harrow, and rather than follow Newman, an Ealing schoolboy, into the Catholic Church he waited and as he always insisted, came in "off his own bat."

When the assembled Church drew into two camps at the Vatican Council in 1870, Manning was leading the Jesuits with the Ultramontane banner overhead and Newman was writing barbed letters to his Bishop about some "insolent faction."

Before the two went up the garden path to Heaven together, ah, what a change came in their relations to the Society! Manning was hindering the English Province all he could from preaching or teaching. Newman had passed into grace with the Society who had taken up his *Grammar of Assent*, a volume to which Manning was wont to sniff dissent.

Newman was no leader. He could only gather himself an

adoring bodyguard; a Praetorian guard of Oratorians. He could rouse and inspire a mighty army without particularly leading them anywhere, while Manning could master the mob. It was the same when Newman was Catholic or Anglican. When he came to the crisis of his life and issued Tract Ninety as a challenge which the Church of England has been trying to answer ever since—he halted between two opinions. As a result it has been difficult to say whether the Tract was an arrow wounding the Bishops and Heads of colleges, or a boomerang which returned and knocked Newman himself off his Anglican pedestal!

Mr. O'Faolain has enjoyed himself immensely resurrecting the Newman family and playing with the all-sensitive, exquisite-defining John Henry in their midst. Will all readers share his enjoyment?

Mr. O'Faolain often uses Strachey's brush, but not so unkindly as the strokes and cuts he gave the English Cardinals in *Eminent Victorians*. The gushing Maria Rosina Giberne makes up to the lonely Cardinal for the defection of Jemima. She had written her allegiance from Cheltenham and abandoned her Platonic girl friend. Even so she was crying "Not yet" when Newman hurried her into a cab "and the two had bowled along to her fate, the handsome Juno who was almost a Lesbian and the gentle ascetic who was almost a saint." This is pure Strachey. Mr. O'Faolain tries to imagine the Cardinal's feelings when Charles refused to see him and doubtless as he turned away past Tenby harbour, he thought:

how Hurrell Froude would have loved this sight! Was there, too, perhaps a dim stir of memory for Palermo and the orange-boat to Marseilles? . . . All of them together on holidays when they were kids, at St. Leonards or at Brighton. . . . Mother that day climbing the sheep-path with Charles and himself. Father bowling down to Hastings with him in the gig . . . the journey to Alton and how grandmama had to have a nip of brandy at Kingston, and Aunt Betsy telling him that Harriett had cried for Vine Cottage and the heath. Charles had been good in Alton. . . . The bankruptcy. . . . The lodgings near Covent Garden. Charles at the Bank. Charles out of work. Charles at work. Charles at Boulogne. Charles at Bristol. . . . Slowly the sea grows dark and cold. Charles lingered on for eighteen months.

Not a word or detail is fiction. It has all been brewed like an

essence out of old letters, dusty memories lying in the Cardinal's papers, and we recall the macabre mirror of dying reminiscence in which Strachey compelled Queen Victoria to glance at the past.

It all makes a book and a novel sidelight on the rise and accompaniments of a great character. Who will do the same for Manning? Who can discover and reveal the same details, humorous or pathetic, all that went on in the Dombey-and-Son-like Manning home at Totteridge? There was also a banking father who went bankrupt, for Cardinal Manning described the bitter scene himself. The interest of these minor financial casualties must always be their reactions on the precocious twain of youths who had found themselves entering serious life as paupers. Both saved themselves by their claims on Oxford, who extended a Fellowship to each, at Oriel and Merton Colleges respectively.

There seems no means of recovering the intimacies of the Manning household in the manner which has proved so revealing of the Newmans. True there was a sister called Mrs. Austen who corresponded to Mrs. Jemima Mozley, and Marriage actually came to Manning himself whereas Newman was always convinced that he was a celibate by grace as well as personal choice. When Manning lost his wife's letters to his great anguish while travelling through France, a chapter in his life became for ever veiled. Henceforth only the scurrilities of Augustus Hare or the innuendoes of Purcell and Strachey could take their place. For him even more than for Newman there was an angel face and smile which he had loved long since and lost awhile. The female contingent about Newman's early days were never so attractive as Caroline Manning, neither his sisters nor the gushing fatuity of Rosina Giberne, who no doubt fell deeply in love with the young Oxford ascetic and for that reason must have rejected his brother Francis. Perhaps had she married Francis and brought him into the Faith he would not have ended his nonagenarian days in traducing his brother. "He did it in the cause—so he averred—of Protestants and Protestantism. He died in 1897, seven years after John, aged ninety-two, and that is the end of the Newmans."

So ends also the most lively, hilarious and penetrating of all the memoirs which have been produced by the Oxford Movement.

For the benefit of those venerable survivors who divide them-

selves still in answer to the puzzling answer of the Anglican catechism,

What is your name?

Ans. N. or M.

(Newmanite or Manningite)

we will add the last traditions we ever heard at first-hand from those who had known or seen them. The late Primate of the Church of Ireland, Dr. Alexander (the last State-appointed Bishop in Ireland) used to describe the effect of Newman's preaching in St. Mary's, Oxford, as simply that of an Apostle such as none who heard him there could ever forget. In years to come, nearly half a century, Dr. Alexander saw passing the Athenaeum in London a shabby rather weary-looking figure, but the features were impossible not to recognize, though they had never been shown at Madame Tussaud's. It was Dr. Newman! And forgetting he was a Bishop of the Disestablishment Dr. Alexander ran into the street for his blessing.

Another memory belongs to the unrecorded Annals of Farm Street. The arrangements for the funeral of Hope Scott were given to my uncle Sir Edward Hope (brother of Father Hope at the Oblates, Manning's Church). The funeral though private, brought the two Cardinals together at Farm Street. Manning presided enthroned and Newman preached in sweet memory of his old friend, who had accompanied Manning to his reception on that fateful day in 1851. There was a slight ceremonial gaffe when the Rector led the preacher up to the presiding prelate for his blessing, forgetting that blessings are not given at funerals. Manning appeared to signal Newman aside as though unwilling to give him his blessing. Newman preached for the last time in London. The occasion had been kept quiet and next day Edward Hope received an unexpected reprimand from Lord Rosebery who was furious at missing the chance of hearing Newman and in a church only fifty yards from his own house. Newman had been a secret passion of his, as one great speaker attracts another, and he consoled himself later by viewing Newman's lying-in-state at Edgbaston, which did not appeal to Manning. It would have been a moving moment if Manning had gone to Birmingham for the actual funeral of his sublime rival. A faded letter of the date lies under hand from Manning's henchman to the

Cardinal—"as divergent reports appear, I venture to ask your Eminence to tell me whether the funeral on Tuesday in Birmingham is to be made memorable by your Eminence's presence. I am your attached servant, Wilfrid Meynell." On the back sheet the Cardinal scribbled: "There will be a Requiem Mass at *our* Oratory on Wednesday at 11 o'clock, at which I hope to be and to say a few words. H. E. C. A. To go to Edgbaston is beyond my strength, but I shall say Mass on that day for the same intention."

The few words indeed amounted to a majestic *oraison funèbre* delivered to a pulsing crowd in the London Oratory, words which as they took flight Bossuet himself would not have disdained.

Wilfrid Meynell's own comment written in later years was: "Here is the Manning letter. And as allusions of his to Newman are very scarce, you may care to have the one I am enclosing. Much criticism followed his non-attendance at Newman's funeral so it is interesting to have his own allusion to it."

Though the two great Cardinals were divided in life, they were not wholly parted in death as must be our hope.

Mr. O'Faolain's inspiring work has led us far and beyond. Whatever blemishes may be found in style or taste, there is epigrammatic promise on almost every page. It will be fair and amusing to quote two instances from a rich crop:

"John's proof of the Catholicism of the first reformers astonished the entire Church of England so much that it went far to astonish John himself out of it."

"If only Pater had lived in that earlier Oxford, what suggestiveness might he not have found in the younger Newman for the later Marius."

Father Bouyer's elaborate and accurate study of Newman's whole life is as different as it could be in style, composition and approach. An Oratorian writes about the greatest of Oratorians under the close and ever-helpful guidance of the Oratory archivist. Without Father Tristram this book had never been. We suspect that the anecdotal vignette with which it concludes could only have come from the same loyal source. The scene is Edgbaston, and Sister Jemima has relented sufficiently to bring a grandson to see her famous brother. The child asks: whether a Saint or a Cardinal is greatest, and Newman answers: "A Cardinal is of the earth earthly and a Saint is of the Heavens heavenly."

CHARLES WILLIAMS

A Heresy Hunt

By

H. D. HANSHELL

IN THE LAST SIX YEARS OR SO something like a *cultus* of the late Charles Williams has grown up in Anglican literary circles. T. S. Eliot's approval and C. S. Lewis's championship have assisted in promoting the cause, but it has been left to Miss Dorothy Sayers to give final, unequivocal formulation to the myth of Williams the great writer. "All the works of his maturity," she tells us,¹ "—novels, plays, poems, and essays in theology or literary criticism—illumine one another, and illumine also *those other great writers* of the central tradition from whom their author himself derived illumination. If Williams is a pregnant interpreter of Dante, Dante is equally a pregnant interpreter of Williams. So, too, with Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth. They and he are 'set on the marble of exchange'."

It is an astonishing claim. That Williams had undoubted abilities as a literary critic may be gathered from such an essay as "The Cycle of Shakespeare" in *The English Poetic Mind*. The wonder is indeed that he should have got as far as he did, for he seems to have regarded literature as something existing in itself, which he could plunge into and use in his own right without the checks of either literary or other discipline; nor is it irrelevant to point out here how badly he could write:

The image of a wood has appeared often enough in English verse. It has indeed appeared so often that it has gathered a good deal of verse into itself; so that it has become a great forest where, with long leagues of changing green between them, strange episodes of high poetry have place. Thus in one part there are the lovers of a midsummer night, or by day a duke and his followers, and in another

¹ *Time and Tide*, December 2, 1950. Italics in quotation mine. H.D.H.

men behind branches so that the wood seems moving, and in another a girl separated from her two lordly young brothers, and in another a poet listening to a nightingale but rather dreaming richly of the grand art than there exploring it, and there are other inhabitants, belonging even more closely to the wood, dryads, fairies, an enchanter's rout. The forest itself has different names in different tongues—Westermain, Arden, Bermain, Broceliande; and in places there are separate trees named, such as that on the outskirts against which a young Northern poet saw a spectral wanderer leaning, or, in the unexplored centre of which only rumours reach even poetry, Igdrasil of one myth, or the Trees of Knowledge and Life of another. So that indeed the whole seems to become this one enormous forest, and our longest and most stable civilizations are only clearings in the midst of it.

The use of such an extended image is to allow the verse of those various "parts of the wood" to point distantly towards each other, without the danger of too hasty comparisons. . . .

That this is so much milk-and-water literariness will at once be apparent; the "extended image" is no true image at all but laboriously synthetic, while its "use" is at once to suggest a grasp of the alleged symbolic unity of this "forest," and to obviate the necessity for objective and critical investigation. Of course it would be unfair to judge Williams merely by this sort of thing, but it does represent a constant vein of self-deception in his work: of that self-deception that led him to believe that he had the gift—I was going to say the charism—of creative imagination.

The passage just quoted is to be found in *The Figure of Beatrice*, Williams's key book and "pregnant interpretation" of Dante. To the unsuspecting reader the most striking as well as deceptive chapters are the earlier ones dealing with the *Vita Nuova* and the prose treatises. Gilson in *Dante the Philosopher* is an obvious corrective to Williams, yet not altogether so. Williams of course lacked Gilson's equipment, yet he had a real feeling for literature, he had "sensibility" however mismanaged. Thus, for Gilson, the *Donna Gentile* who consoles Dante towards the end of the *Vita* is quite flatly Philosophy and nothing more, whereas for Williams of course she is every inch a woman, and he launches on the strength of this into one of his wilder theories. In a very sensitive discussion of the matter in his *Essays on the Vita Nuova* J. E. Shaw shows how the *Donna Gentile* is both a woman and Philosophy. But of this more in a moment.

In the chapters on the *Commedia* itself Williams says much that is useful and enlightening. He shows convincingly—and this is no small matter—that whatever else she may be Beatrice is first of all a woman; and he does this, significantly, by pointing to what the text says. But even the innocent reader will scarcely fail to have his doubts at times about Williams as the shadow of Beatrice conducting him through the *Paradiso*: he will suspect that it is an intruding shadow. As everyone knows there are delicate points in the interpretation of Dante, and I have no intention of stepping in where experts tread with caution. Yet can it be that Dante meant all that Williams says he does by the phrase "*Figlia del tuo figlio*"?—that he saw in the Incarnation the archetypal pattern of "the quality of love *off-springing* from the quality of Beatrice, and the quality of Beatrice *off-springing* from the quality of love"? (Italics mine.) Had Dante a more sophisticated view of the matter than is warranted by those words addressed to Our Lady in the liturgy: "*Genuisti qui te fecit*"?

As usual Williams's thesis is extra-literary and para-theological. He is really engaged in putting Dante where Dante himself puts Beatrice, among the Saints and the Doctors; and this not imaginatively but in sober prose (if Williams's prose can be called sober). There is a "Way of Sanctity" and a theology unrecognized by the Church: the "Dantean way" and "Romantic Theology," that is, "theology as applied to romantic experiences—as Mystical Theology is applied to mystical experiences, and Dogmatic Theology to thought about dogmas." It was Dante (says Williams) who first charted for us the theological implications of falling-in-love, of the "Beatrician moment." "It is certain that many lovers had seen many ladies as Dante saw Beatrice. Dante's great gift to us was not the vision but the ratification, by his style, of the validity of the vision. Where we ignorantly worship, there he defined."

Williams's exegesis is based on the *Vita Nuova* where Dante describes and analyses the effects his meetings with Beatrice had on him. "He says that when she met him in the street, and said good-morning, he was so highly moved that he was, for the moment, in a state of complete good-will, complete *caritas* towards everyone. . . . She has awakened in Dante a celestial reverie; she has appeared to him the very carriage of beauty and goodness; she has, unknowingly, communicated to him an

experience of *caritas*."¹ Williams evidently means to take "charity" in its strict theological sense. It is instructive to compare his approach with that of Dr. Charles S. Singleton in *An Essay on the Vita Nuova*. Dr. Singleton writes as a scholar and critic, not as a quasi-theologian, and Dante is seen as a poet in relation to the poetic traditions of the time. "A troubadour's love would have seen only Beatrice, a saint's love would have seen only God. But the last sentence of the *Vita Nuova* is the affirmation of a pattern which one who was not a saint, but who refused to remain a troubadour, saw as the final expression of a love which began where the troubadours began and ended with the saints." Though Dr. Singleton shares Williams's views on the interpretation of "charity," he is aware that he is dealing with a poet and with the ambivalences of a poet's language, as his discussion of the world *salute* shows: "the public meaning of *salute* in the *Vita Nuova* is Christ, the private meaning is Beatrice. But without the first, the second, by losing that tension which a work of art can least of all things afford to lose, has lost much more than half its meaning."

To come now to the interpretation of *caritas*. Reviewing Dr. Singleton's book in THE MONTH (November 1949), Fr. Kenelm Foster, O.P., had this criticism to make: "the term 'charity' is applied, I think, too hastily, without due consideration of the difference between Dante's thought . . . and technical theology. Outside the *Paradiso* Dante does not, I think, speak of *carità*—or *caritas* or *caridade*—with theological precision; he uses the term very little anyhow, and when he does so its meaning is probably bounded by the *recta dilectio* of *Mon.* I, 2, which is simply the love of what is properly lovable (*perseitas*) in God and man. But such a *dilectio* is not necessarily, in theory and by definition, the specifically Christian virtue of charity." The basis then for Romantic Theology which Williams seeks in the *Vita Nuova* is at least a doubtful one. And certainly Dante could never have expressed himself as Williams does in *The Figure of Beatrice* where he speaks with an unholy gush of "that first communication of charity, that first sensible coming of the Holy Ghost."

However, once he has the bit between his teeth there is no holding Williams, as his treatment of the *Donna Gentile* episode

¹ *Religion and Love in Dante: a short essay presenting Williams's "message" in a nutshell.*

shows. The way in which this lady comes to be identified with Philosophy, whose attractions also the poet had begun powerfully to feel, is, as I have remarked, most subtly and persuasively demonstrated by J. E. Shaw:¹

Whether this belief was a genuine conviction with him or whether it was a fiction that he was glad to entertain does not concern us, for in the latter case it was at any rate a fiction which he accepted as true for himself, just as he had accepted the idea that Beatrice was a miracle, a trinity of trinities. He persuaded himself to identify Philosophy with the Donna Gentile, and that persuasion was either a sop to his conscience, an ally to the rational argument in favour of yielding to the charmer, or else it was a conviction which contributed powerfully to his final surrender. The two comforters had become one in his imagination.

Williams's obsession with Romantic Theology leads him to gloss things in this way: it is possible, he asserts, to fall in love a second time, even after marriage, without being unfaithful to the original vision and the person concerned: indeed one must train oneself to recognize the "communication of charity," etc., wherever it is vouchsafed, and learn to appreciate it without jealousy when it occurs to one's actual partner. "There need not be sin; to observe and adore the glory is not sin, nor to receive the humility and charity shed from the glory, of the second image. . . ." Williams omitted to term this the "theology" of the *amitié amoureuse*.

In dealing with Williams's ideas two distinct questions are likely to be asked. Are these ideas to be found in Dante? Are they orthodox? That the answer to both is in the negative is, I hope, beginning to be clear. I have already suggested that Williams's critical approach is suspect, and I now go on to consider more his ideas in themselves.

The phrase which Williams coined to express his basic thesis, and which has gained some currency, is "the affirmation of images." There are two ways in which man comes to God: by the affirmation and rejection, respectively, of created beings or "images." There is of course nothing novel in all this. It is the peculiar twist given to the idea by Williams that concerns us. He lumps all that is traditionally known as sanctity under the "rejection of images." "The other Way is the Way of Affirmation,

¹ *Op cit*, p. 27, *et seq.*

the approach to God through these images. . . . But for the full expression of it the Church had to wait for Dante." Dante is the *Doctor Matrimonialis*; but he is more; he is the real Doctor of the Incarnation, of "the glorious and holy flesh," which the ascetics and celibates of Christendom have denied (though Williams gives them full marks for doing so, as he does the rejecting young man in *The Place of the Lion*: it is their "way.") Williams of course reminds us that Pseudo-Dionysius was a prime rejector of images, but it is surprising to see him put forward as a classical exponent of Christian spirituality, and even more surprising to be told that St. Ignatius of Loyola is of his company. If the affirmation of images is to have any meaning at all, surely St. Ignatius is something of an example of that "way." As his story shows, he brought with him into his converted life the whole of his romantic nature; and did Williams never hear of the meditation in the *Spiritual Exercises* on "the Kingdom of Christ"? One has only to read the opening "exercise" in that book to find the true Christian mind on the subject of images: St. Ignatius of course calls them "creatures," and he says (to translate into Williams's language) that these are to be "affirmed" in so far as they help one in the purpose for which one was made, and "rejected" in so far as they are a hindrance. (Married persons, for example, will know how to deal with "the second image" should it occur.) The final "exercise" in the book is the "Contemplation for Obtaining Love." It is the "affirmation" of all God's "images" seen precisely for what they are, as coming from God and leading back to him; but it comes at the end, not at the beginning; it is for the detached and disciplined soul; it is the way contemplatives look at things. Are not the prose treatises of St. John of the Cross the affirmation of the images in his poems? Yet the author of *The Dark Night of the Soul* would have been accounted by Williams a rejector of images. St. John knew what he was doing as a poet, and what he was doing as a mystical theologian. Dante also presumably knew what he was doing. The matter is at once more simple and more complex than Williams allows.

"Marriage becomes a way of the soul"; it does indeed, though it took time for the Platonism of the early Church to be digested and partly extruded, and for divines to get used to the idea that Christian marriage is not rather a hindrance to holiness. But

sanctity in the married life is essentially the same as in any other: it involves the life of prayer, etc. Marriage is not "a unique opportunity of following" a new way to God. The "glorious and holy flesh" to which Christians look is the sacred humanity of the God-man, in union with which they are themselves to be glorified both in body and soul. That is their great and supernatural affirmation. As for "The Way of Affirmations" being "more frequented by the artist and poet" (Miss Sayers again), St. John of the Cross makes havoc of this claim. How many poets and artists, even among the nominally Christian, have in fact been concerned with the way of perfection? And if they have been, is it not as ordinary penitents that they have seen themselves, and to the perennial spirituality that they have turned, with or without a resulting tension in their lives as artists? Dante anyway drank of the well-head of medieval spirituality; it is to St. Bernard that he turns at the summit of his ascent. Commenting on Beatrice's earlier "eclipse" in the *Paradiso* (X), Gilson has these words: "Now this first eclipse of Beatrice by love clearly portends her final eclipse, which she herself will have intended and caused. She it is who sends St. Bernard to Dante's side to lead him to the final ecstasy. . . . The truth is, then, that she cannot herself lead Dante to the end of his journey." The "Way of Affirmation" turns out to be the "Way of Rejection," or rather, there is only a single way, though that one a way of infinite variety: "the right use of creatures."

Moreover, Williams tells us, "Beatrice is not only a type of the love-relationship; she is a type of every relationship." Allowing this, we may say that the "Moment of Beatrice" is, as another writer puts it, a moment "in" yet "out of" time. We remember such lines in *Four Quartets* as:

We had the experience, but missed the meaning
The hint half-guessed, the gift half-understood, is Incarnation.

But Eliot also says:

the rest

Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.

One gets the impression that for Williams it is Beatrice, Beatrice all the way, and that he sees the *Commedia* too much in the light of the *Vita Nuova*, however interpreted. Beatrice is certainly the centre of the earlier work, but in the later she is, if one may say

so, put in her place. And it is a Beatrice who has "absorbed the *Convivio*." "The second Beatrice," Fr. Foster writes,¹ "is an adult, which the first was not." That she is a peculiar "affirmation" of Dante's I am not denying: what I do deny is that Williams gives a satisfactory account of it. One suspects that there is as much of Coventry Patmore as of Dante in his thesis.

The root of Williams's confusions seems to lie in his misunderstanding of the Supernatural. He preferred the word *arch-natural*. Theologians distinguish between the "supernatural" and the "preternatural" gifts with which man was endowed in his unfallen state. By the supernatural gift of grace man was enabled to share from the first in the very life of the Blessed Trinity. The preternatural gifts strengthened and refined man's humanity. Through the Incarnation the first is restored to us, but not the second: we die, and are variously afflicted in mind and body till we come to do so. I think it would be fair to say that Williams's theology allows for the (technically) preternatural, but not for the (technically) supernatural. One of his more readable novels, *The Place of the Lion*, describes the visitation or invasion of certain Archetypal Ideas. One of the characters, a lepidopterist, sees a great creature, the butterfly of his dreams, and exclaims of his own collection: "I always knew they were true." The tone of the book reminds one of an early Wells fantasy; but when one considers where in Christian Platonic tradition the Forms are situated, namely, in the mind of God, the incongruity of Williams's neo-gnostic treatment of the theme becomes apparent.

One is tempted at times to think that for Williams the Incarnation was almost something immanent in humanity. His peculiar theological twist is well seen in a little book called *The Forgiveness of Sins*. In the chapter entitled "The Sin of Adam," he (unwittingly) expounds the Scotist view that God intended the Incarnation in any case and quite independently of the Fall and the need for Redemption. "The Incarnation was the single dominating fact, and to that all flesh was related." So far, so good: now comes the "novelty." The question is: how can finite man be said to offend the infinite God? Answer, in no sense. God doesn't come into it. Williams removes one vexing term of the problem. It is not, he asserts, against God that man sins, but against the humanity of Christ. "Whatever sin was, it was a

¹ "The Adolescent Vision in Dante," *Dominican Studies*, April 1948.

thing repugnant to his nature as Man, repugnant to his flesh; that was, in fact, its definition." The offence of finite man now has a finite term, though Williams distinguishes between the sin of man and the sin of the angels. "The angels were different, they might rebel and their rebellion be only in relation to God as creator." The force of that "only" might seem to imply that after all man retains the basic relationship of contingency. Yet Williams's theory amounts to the denial of this. Sin, anyway, is not to be conceived of apart from the creature's utter indebtedness for its being to the Creator; and man's being created, so to speak, for the sake of the Incarnate Word would still not affect man's creaturely status.

It is understood in Catholic teaching that members of the Mystical Body of Christ (the Church) are to bear one another's burdens, are to make up for one another's shortcomings, are spiritually complementary. Christ himself set the example and implanted the principle of vicarious action. Williams has his own version of this doctrine, which he speaks of as "substitution." It is a stock theme of his novels, to one of which I turn for evidence of the twist given by Williams to the true doctrine. In *Descent into Hell* there is a young woman suffering from an abnormal fear: she keeps meeting her mysterious double or doppelgänger; she goes to the poet Stanhope for help. Stanhope is a master of the "Way," and obviously a projection of Williams himself. He tells the girl he is going to "carry" her burden.

"I can't imagine not being afraid," she said.

"But you will not be," he answered, also rising, certainty in his voice, "because you will leave all that to me. Will you please me by remembering that absolutely?"

"I am to remember," she said, and almost broke into a little trembling laugh, "that you are being worried and terrified instead of me?"

"That I have taken it all over," he said, "so there is nothing left for you. . . ."

Stanhope, turning his eyes from her parting figure, looked at the rehearsal and then settled himself more comfortably in his chair . . . he recollected Pauline; he visualized her going along a road; he visualized another Pauline coming to meet her. And as he did so his mind contemplated not the first but the second Pauline; he took trouble to apprehend the vision, he summoned through all his sensations an approaching fear . . . he sat on, imagining to himself, etc."

And so through "imagining to himself" Stanhope bears Pauline's burden. It is a psychological, not a spiritual business. Prayer apparently does not enter into it; and "there's no need to introduce Christ unless you wish." It is a travesty of the doctrine which teaches Christians that they can pray and offer up their own trials and sufferings for their neighbour, and even—as we may read in the lives of the saints—receive at the hand of God afflictions specifically in another's stead.

Again and again in his novels Williams goes in for long "imaginings" which are pseudo-creative of the objects contemplated. There is this passage from *The Place of the Lion*:

He sat on, from recollection passing to reflection, from reflection to obedience, from obedience to a trance of attention. As he had dreamed, if it were a dream, that he rose on powerful wings through the air of the spiritual abyss, so now he felt again the power between Quentin and himself active in its own place. Within that power the presence of his friend grew more defined to him, and the room in which he sat was but the visible extension of an immortal state. He loved; yet not he, but Love living in him. Quentin was surely there, in the room, leaning by the window as he had so often leaned, and Anthony instinctively passed and went across, as he had so often gone across, to join him. If, when he reached it, there was no mortal form, there was yet a reception of him into something that had been and still was; his movement freed it to make a movement of its own.

Williams's moments of "attention" are too often indistinguishable from the sort of "trance" which he condemns, his "creative" spinings of symbols, etc., no different from the fantasy-worlds, the withdrawals from "holy fact," which he deplores. In his description of "Gomorrha" in *Descent into Hell* he is indeed more successful than with Stanhope and those who follow "the Way." "Gomorrha" is the state of those who deny "holy fact" (*sainte réalité*). It is part of Williams's message that the genuine love of anything, however intermixed with impure motives, is a step towards salvation. The refusal of reality, the constructing of one's own universe in order to shut out the real one, is the way to damnation. It is, of course, no new idea, nor need it be for the purposes of a novelist. In the last chapter of *Descent into Hell* Williams shows what he might have done had he really been able to address himself to being a novelist, to the study of "holy fact." There is another touch earlier in the book which also merits

attention. Wentworth, in love with Adela who has rejected him, falls back on an "imaginary" Adela of his own, hypostatized in the usual Williams manner through many tedious pages in which fantasies of Adam and Lilith, apparently quite soberly attended, are described: a long way round of getting to what is evidently a matter of auto-eroticism. Then Wentworth has to meet the real Adela again.

This distressed him; it was loud, harsh, uncouth. It was like the rest of the tiresome world into which he had been compelled to enter—violent, smashing, bewildering by its harsh clamour, and far from the soft sweetness of his unheard melody. . . .

Adela said, modulating her voice, "Have you got a headache? What a shame! It's good of you to turn out, but we do want to be sure everything's all right, I mean if we must have uniforms. Personally. . . ."

Wentworth said in a voice of exhaustion: "Oh, please . . .!"

There is here a sketch of something which might well have exercised a novelist's art. If Williams could have actualized his *ideas*. . . . But notice the adjectives in the passage: all generalities, nothing concrete. We are told about something instead of an experience's being made available to the imagination, perhaps by a Brobdingnagian touch.

The irony is that a man whose creative writings all in some form or other celebrate what he called "holy fact" should lack the imaginative writer's grasp of that one thing. Of Williams's verse I will content myself with remarking that he did not practise what he preached. As he himself truly affirmed: "This is the law of symbolism—that the symbol must be utterly itself before it can be a symbol." Williams's fondness for treating of people already out of the body has been generally commented on. The trouble is that he never knows quite what he means by the death region in *Descent into Hell* and *All Hallows' Eve*. Falling between the theological and the symbolical stools, he presents us with something not unlike the world of *Outward Bound*. And there is no fusion between the Dantean or other references and the latter day *mise-en-scène*; the association is not imaginatively caught but foisted on from outside.

The supernatural mountain on which they stood shook, and there went through Battle Hill itself the slightest vibration from that other quaking.

We feel the same about the very shadowy conception of "the City," the roseal glow, and the crucifixion-scene in *All Hallows' Eve*; while the miracle-working at the end bears all the marks of wish-fulfilment. We are very far from "holy fact." Indeed, as I have already hinted, the alarming thing about Williams is his own literary addiction to Gomorrha under the guise of what Mr. Eliot has called the "high dream."

Perhaps I should have said something of *The Descent of the Dove*, but I have hunted my heretic sufficiently. Williams was critic, novelist, poet, playwright, and theologian (of a sort), and all to a greater or lesser extent *manqué*. He had liveliness of mind and energy, but his famed "originality" was basically a matter of indiscipline of spirit. What can it have been in him that so impressed his friends and literary supporters? No doubt we shall better understand when we have read his biography.

THE EARL AND THE ALCHEMIST—I

By

CHRISTOPHER DEVLIN

INTRODUCTION

THE EARL IS FERDINANDO STANLEY, LORD STRANGE, who succeeded his father as Earl of Derby on September 25, 1593. The Alchemist is not so easily nameable. He is the shadow of something that began creeping towards Ferdinando in 1591. Two years later it fell upon him in the mystery known as the Hesketh Plot. The Hesketh Plot is what I am going to write about. The bare facts are that a man called Richard Hesketh came to see Ferdinando on the day that he became Earl of Derby. Two months later Hesketh was hanged for high treason. In the following April Ferdinando, aged thirty-five, died of a violent sickness which some ascribed to poison and others to witchcraft.

Those are undisputed facts. The story about them, after some variations, reached Camden's *Annals* in the following form: Hesketh brought messages from the exiles, Cardinal Allen and Sir William Stanley, and the Jesuits. They invited Ferdinando to become King of England, and threatened him with death if he revealed their plan. He revealed it. So he died—cut off, apparently, by poison. That is the version generally accepted, for example by Cokayne's *Complete Peerage*.

Historians have not bothered to test it, or bothered much at all about the Hesketh Plot. Ferdinando's claim to the throne (he was in undisputed line through his mother from Henry VII) was soon a forgotten might-have-been; and his actual claim to remembrance has been a literary one. He was patron of the company that presented the first plays of William Shakespeare.

As a matter of fact, the two claims should not be divorced. Professor Tillyard has shown how likely it is that Shakespeare, right from the start of his History Cycle, had a broadly political aim: to stress the evils that result from a disputed Succession. But the years when he was writing Parts 2 and 3 of *Henry VI* (which are now accepted as his own work) were just the years, 1591–2, when he was under Lord Strange's patronage, and when Lord Strange was in danger from Succession intrigues. My purpose is not to comment on Shakespeare. But I believe that in one specific play, Part 2 of *Henry VI*, he provides a better background for the Hesketh Plot than the usual history-book façade.

In Hall's *Chronicles* he had, of course, a grand story pregnant with analogies between the situations of 1446 and 1592: defeat in France, discontent at home, and two rival factions regarding the Succession. The ill-starred campaign in Brittany, subject of much political recrimination and popular discontent, was drifting towards the disaster at Craon (May 1592) where Englishmen, as their general complained, "ran away infinitely." A new concept in popular discontent was "the mob" or *mobile vulgus*,¹ something that a faction-leader could use, as York is said to have used Jack Cade. There is a good deal of evidence like this from a news letter of August:

There were never more malcontents of all sorts, gents as well as

¹ Watson: *Decacordon*, 1602.

others, insomuch that they seem to be at that point that they care not what stir may happen, or who could attempt it, so they might mend their conditions and avenge their injuries (Verstegan, August 1592. *Stonyhurst MSS.*).

The rival factions were those of the Queen's Ministers, the Cecils, and the Queen's favourite, the young Earl of Essex. As early as 1589 Essex had established himself as the champion of King James and his right of succession to Elizabeth. The Cecils were obliged to groom some other candidate, if only as a stalking-horse. By 1592, either faction had its own rival organization of spies and stooges.

There was nothing, however, in Hall or Holinshed to show Shakespeare how to make a clear-cut theatrical pattern out of the situation in 1446. He achieved this by masking the Contention of York and Lancaster behind the rivalry of two foreground figures, Suffolk and Duke Humphrey, and behind the personal feud of York and Somerset springing from accusations of military incompetence. With the elimination of Humphrey, first, and then of Suffolk, and with the fading-out of Somerset, the stage is left clear for the main contention. It is possible that the situation in 1592 supplied him with this pattern. For it was the death of the fallen favourite Hatton, the sentencing to death of Sir John Perrot, and the decline in favour of Sir Walter Raleigh that set the political stage for the main rivalry between the Earl of Essex and Sir Robert Cecil.

A certain tang of bluff eccentricity in Shakespeare's Duke Humphrey, the Lord Protector, recalls the luckless Perrot, late Lord Deputy of Ireland. But the similarity is woven closer by a Shakespearian refinement of intrigue which owes nothing to Hall or Holinshed. Shakespeare depicts Humphrey as being pulled down by a temporary and iniquitous *combination* between York and his Lancastrian rivals. This is a Shakespearian invention. But it seems really to have happened in the case of Perrot. The Queen did not wish his condemnation. His enemy Hatton had died in disfavour. Both Cecil and Essex, who between them were all-powerful, knew that the charges against Perrot—that he had conspired with the King of Spain and Sir William Stanley—were the forged fabrications of a renegade priest. They could easily have discredited them. But they allowed their odium to pass unchallenged and to pre-judge the verdict.

The figure of the renegade double-crossing priest is introduced by Shakespeare into the scene where Humphrey's wife, Eleanor, is caught trying to determine the Succession by witchcraft. Shakespeare has transferred this scene, recorded by Hall under 1441, to the conspiracy against Humphrey in 1446. In the play, Eleanor is trapped, with York's assistance, by means of a priest who takes money from both sides. There is nothing about this in the *Chronicles*. It is a Tudor refinement introduced by Shakespeare. He could hardly have foreseen that another Royal lady, the Countess of Derby, Ferdinando's mother, was to be disgraced on exactly the same charge in 1595; but the use of sorcerers as *agents provocateurs* has been going on for some years before that.

These two devices—the combination of two deadly rivals to destroy a third party, and the use of sorcerers as *agents provocateurs*—happen to be those which are most essential to unlocking the Hesketh Mystery. It may or may not be that Shakespeare borrowed them from contemporary practice. If he did, it would add a spice of interest. But my inquiry is already a detective-problem in its own right.

It falls into two questions:

- (1) Who was responsible for sending Hesketh to Ferdinando?
- (2) Was there a connection between Hesketh's death and Ferdinando's?

These questions will occupy Parts II and III of the present study. Meanwhile, I will disentangle from their backgrounds the two principal figures: the glittering, high-bred, sensitive Ferdinando, Spenser's *Amyntas*, and the shadowy, nondescript form of Richard Hesketh.

I

God forbid any malice should prevail
That faultless may condemn a nobleman.
(2. *H.VI.* 3. ii.).

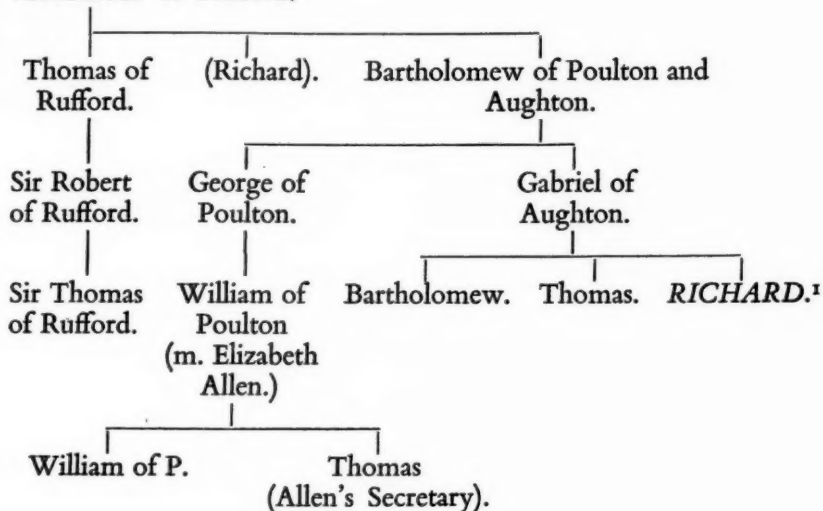
In the land between the Pennine Range and the Dee and Ribble estuaries, the House of Stanley was the peak of a feudal edifice of families, Hesketh, Hoghton, Gerard, Langton, Shireburne, and many others, cemented by constant intermarriage. The Derby Household Books are full of their visits and feasts.¹

¹ Stanley Papers II, *Chetham Society*, xxxi.

One entry for Christmas 1587 is worth quoting: "On Saturday Sir Tho. Hesketh Players went awaie . . ."; for this was the Sir Thomas Hesketh of Rufford to whom Alexander Hoghton of Lea in his will of 1581 had commended his players and "Will Shakeshaft"—who was once supposed to be Shakespeare, and it may be that he was, and that thus he entered the Derby household.

Most of these families were Catholic, open or secret. The Heskeths of Rufford and of Poulton were open recusants; William of Poulton had married the sister of Dr. Allen, the exiled Catholic leader, and his son was Allen's Secretary. But the Richard Hesketh of this study belonged to the Aughton branch that was predominantly Protestant. Here is the genealogy:

HESKETH of Rufford.



Of the three Aughton brothers, Bartholomew was a "temporizer," but Thomas was a keen anti-Catholic lawyer, later Attorney to the Court of Wards, and Richard also, on his own evidence, was a decided Protestant. In 1581 he was a merchant, holding the half-commercial, half-diplomatic post of Agent at Antwerp. He was also a confidential friend and helper of the Queen's eccentric but influential favourite, Dr. Dee, the astrologer

¹ The version in *D.N.B.* is wrong, as Sir E. K. Chambers has pointed out in his *Shakespearian Gleanings* (O.U.P., 1944), p. 55.

and alchemist, whose *Diary* has the following, in the Latin used for its more portentous utterances:

Aug. 12th (1581). Through the diligence in my affairs of my friend Richard Hesketh, Agent at Antwerp, I received a letter from Dr. Andreas Hess, the student of occult philosophy, and along with the letter I received *Mercurii Mensitam seu Sigillam Planetarum*.

Hesketh's association with Dee is confirmed by a news-writer, Verstegan, long resident in Antwerp:

The man's name was Richard Hesketh, he had been sometime a merchant, but was fallen into decay by dealing with alchemists.

A few years later the positions were reversed. Hesketh had returned to his native Lancashire, while Dee and his "skryer" (or medium) Edward Kelley had migrated abroad to Prague, where the Emperor Rudolf's patronage proved more lucrative than Queen Elizabeth's had been. Dee was a sorcerer rather than a genuine alchemist. His search for the elixir of gold was incidental to his main passion, which was to descry the future and "call spirits from the vasty deep." Kelley, on the other hand, was a keen if fraudulent transmuter of metals; he had had his ears cropped for "coining" in Lancashire, but he acquired more skill under Dr. Dee. As his skill grew, he became more and more independent of his master, until the great day came when his experiments succeeded and *gold* appeared in the crucible. Chaucer's world would have laughed or yawned, but the sixteenth-century potentates were all agog. Kelley became an international celebrity and a national asset. He was knighted by the Emperor Rudolf. From Lord Burghley in England there began to arrive a series of almost fulsome letters begging the "good knight" to return and offer the fruits of his genius to his Sovereign who was anxious to overlook any past misunderstandings. But Kelley, with no ear-tips left to tingle, was enjoying himself. Famous men like Edward Dyer, the poet and courtier, were completely under his spell year after year. It was Dyer who spread Kelley's fame in the English Court. He and others like him who had been devotees of Dee now deserted the master for the disciple. In the end it was Dee who came home in dejection in 1589 to the ransacked house at Mortlake.

On his return he renewed an acquaintance that must be carefully noted. Ten years earlier, a certain Richard Hickman, a

protégé of Sir Christopher Hatton, had introduced to Dee his two nephews, Bartholomew and William Hickman. They appear to have been in confidential employment about the law courts; Lord Keeper Puckering may have taken them on when he succeeded Hatton. But on Dee's return Bartholomew Hickman began to act as his "skryer" in place of the absent Kelley. In the riot of names that confuses this study, the name of *Hickman* should be singled out and kept in a special compartment of the memory, not be confused with Hesketh.

Meanwhile in this same year, 1589, Hesketh had been forced to leave his home in Over Darwen and go abroad again. He had been one of the tenants of Thomas Langton, "Baron" of Newton, who held most of the land between Bolton and Blackburn, when an unfortunate affray occurred. Eighty of Langton's tenants set out to recover some cattle from the lands of Thomas Hoghton of Lea, and Hoghton was killed in the ensuing fracas. Walsingham, as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, took the matter very seriously. Langton and forty of his tenants were arrested and charged with murder. No jury in Lancashire could be found to try them. But Hesketh had not waited to be arrested and charged, perhaps because he was too near the actual slaying. He made for Prague, and joined the entourage of Sir Edward Kelley. During these years there were two types of Englishmen converging on Prague, with overlapping activities. There was a thin and furtive "gold-rush" of people like one Henry Leigh, steward of the Dacres estates, who "by the cause of my fortune was driven to go to Prague to seek some favour of Sir Edward Kelley." And there were agents like one Thomas Webbe, who was sent to keep an eye on the experiments of Kelley, and on Dyer, who was himself supposed to be keeping an eye on Kelley.

The Queen was still most anxious for Kelley's return. But, in April 1591, even as Lord Burghley was penning a last hortatory letter, disaster occurred. The Emperor gave ear to Kelley's enemies, and the knight was hurled into prison. Dyer, too, was put under house arrest until a resounding Latin letter in Elizabeth's best style procured his release. The English gold-seekers, bereft of their patron, turned for protection elsewhere: to an English Jesuit in Prague named Father Thomas Stephenson. This man, who afterwards worked for twenty years in England, has a reputation for integrity above reproach. No-one has ever

attempted to incriminate him in the alleged plot. He helped his fellow-countrymen out of sheer goodness of heart, though no doubt he hoped to convert them as well. Kelley's imprisonment was eased and he began to return to favour. Hesketh and Leigh found lodgings with a friend of Fr. Stephenson, a fellow-Lancastrian, a goldsmith named Abraham Falcon. In the Falcon family-circle we have the first glimpse of Hesketh as a human being. It is not a sinister one. He appears as a jolly elderly fellow with a touch of the Lancashire comic. "Yellow-haired," he is described later, "a stout man, fifty years of age, clothed in yellow fustian with lace after the English manner."

It seems a far cry from the alchemists in Prague to Ferdinando, now Deputy-Lieutenant to his father in Lancashire and Cheshire. But it would be only too easy to trace a connection. Hesketh, Dee, and Dyer lead us straight to that occult circle of scholars, poets, and noblemen that has been christened "The School of Night." It is agreed that when Shakespeare flung out this phrase he was aiming at "Sir Walter Raleigh's School of Atheism," and also at a group of nobles praised as occult philosophers by Chapman in the dedication to his *Shadow of Night* (1594). Now the first of this group is the Earl of Derby, "ingenious Darbie," who is praised also in the second hymn as "Ganymede." It is important to settle whether this occult philosopher, "ingenious Darbie," is Ferdinando.

Miss Bradbrook in her brilliant reconstruction, *The School of Night*, accepting the general opinion that he is, refers to him *en passant* as "an alchemist, and also suspected of witchcraft," as "a Catholic," and as "very unpopular." But I think the evidence shows that it was not he but his brother William, the Sixth Earl, who was the alchemist, and that Ferdinando was certainly not unpopular—until the Hesketh affair.

Until the Hesketh affair, Ferdinando and Essex were close friends, as may be seen, retrospectively, in their letters (Lodge: *Illustrations*, ii). But Essex was the declared enemy of all this occult business. Shakespeare's comedy *Love's Labour Lost*, written probably in autumn 1593 at the request of the Essex circle, is the story of four young friends who escape from the pseudo-mystical misogyny of the *Shadow of Night*; and of these four it seems obvious that "Ferdinand, King of Navarre" is a stately profile of Ferdinando, and "Berowne" is a quizzical compliment to the

Earl of Essex. It seems more likely, then, that "ingenious Darbie" was not Ferdinando, but William, who became Derby on April 16th—especially since Chapman made last-minute revisions to suit political changes in 1594. It would be more likely still if the publishing date, 1594, went by the legal year which began on March 25th. But I am not sure about this.

In any case, it is clear that Ferdinando was happily married to a beautiful wife, their only sorrow being that they had no son but only daughters; whereas William was an intimate of Dr. Dee, a recluse, and a "misogynist"—though later tied in most unhappy marriage to Burghley's granddaughter. There is much matter for reflection here. It is Ferdinando who emerges as the daylight figure shining and gracious, William as the bird of night. Yet it was William, evidently, who was Lord Burghley's candidate.

It is perhaps not accidental that Shakespeare invests Ferdinando with more dignity though less colour than "Berowne" (Essex). Ferdinando was a much older man, and he could already command in his own right the sort of feudal loyalty that Essex was trying by *condottiere* methods to amass. It is true that Ferdinando's followers were mostly Catholic; his bosom-friend Thomas Gerard, for instance, was brother to a famous and much sought-after Jesuit. But he walked with great care in this regard. "Lord Strange gives good countenance to religion," says a report of 1590, "when he is with us." He had need to, for this same report had greatly alarmed Lord Burghley. "The number of recusants is great and doth daily increase," wrote the Bishop of Chester, complaining of "remiss execution of penalties." Burghley had a special map of Lancashire, one of Saxton's new ones, made for him; and put a cross against the names of many gentlemen whom he did not trust.¹ Through the new Chancellor of the Duchy, Sir Thomas Heneage, a devout Cecilian, means were also being sought of clipping the Stanley wings still further. One of Heneage's most aggressive instruments in this task was to be Thomas Hesketh, the brother of our Richard.

But there was nothing surprising in this attitude of suspicion, all candidates of the blood royal were under a sort of surveillance. It did not mean any enmity, such as existed between Essex and Sir Robert Cecil. With the soothing help of his wife Alice, who

¹ Cf. *Catholic Records*, vol. iv.

would sometimes add an effusive postscript to a rather cold letter, Ferdinando maintained good relations with the incalculable Sir Robert, who was now slipping quietly but irresistibly into his father's place. Nor is there any reason to doubt that Ferdinando enjoyed, and loyally repaid, the trust and affection of Queen Elizabeth. While preferring the freedom of his native counties, he did his duties at Court with modest and pleasing success. He had taken part with Thomas Gerard among the thirteen pairs of knights in the famous tilting of 1590. And, in the Christmas festivities of the following year, his company of actors had a striking success, presenting six plays before the Queen as opposed to one each of the other companies. Altogether, in 1592 he stood at the full tide of his manhood—he was thirty-three—and of his worldly prospects. Yet, unknown to him, in May of the previous year the shadow had already fallen.

It is an event which demands the closest attention.

Locked away among Lord Burghley's papers was a document brought over by a secretly-renegade priest named John Cecil, who had been in Government employ at least since 1588. John Cecil is a person who would require a long chapter to himself; he was an adventurer of uncommon ability. But all that need be said here is that he and his companion, another renegade named Fixer, came over with the intention of offering themselves as spies. On being taken before Sir Robert Cecil, they betrayed the new routes by which their fellow-priests were arriving, and the private letters entrusted to them by Catholic exiles; and then they produced a series of statements which may be read in the Domestic State Papers (238/160-163). There is some disagreement between one statement and another, but the main drift is that they were instructed by *Father Persons* to "seek entrance with my Lord Strange and cause Catholics to cast their eyes upon him," and they were to keep their mission secret from all except from Fathers Garnet and Southwell. As an earnest of *bona fides*, they produced a letter purporting to come from Persons, instructing them to reply to him in the following terms:

Your cousin the baker is well inclined and glad to hear of you, and meaneth not to give over his pretence to the old bakehouse you know of, but rather to put the same in suit when his ability shall serve.¹

¹ *Calendar of Hatfield MSS.* IV. 104. One may legitimately ask why this letter is not among the State Papers like the others brought over by John Cecil.

This they glossed as: "by baker and bakehouse is understood my Lord Strange and the title they would have him pretend when her Majesty dieth"—thus inculcating Ferdinando in some previous supposed negotiation. Sir Robert's only recorded reaction was a letter to his father of June 10th saying that John Cecil would do good work if he avoided the suspicions of his fellow-priests. Perhaps this attitude of off-hand approval reveals the true significance of John Cecil's information.

The written sources for Persons's life were once so difficult of access that historians have contented themselves, in sequence, with believing the worst. But in fact, while Persons's chief slanderers, Morgan and Paget and William Gifford, were hand-in-glove with would-be assassins and *agents provocateurs*, Parry, Savage, Ballard, George and Gilbert Gifford, this letter is the only factual evidence adduced against Persons of conspiracy in the proper sense of the word.

What sort of evidence is it? It is clean against Allen's and Persons's strict rule of *not* letting their seminary priests mix in politics, let alone such rash politics as this. It is clean against their consistent policy of *not* committing the Catholics to any definite English candidate. It is not in his own writing; it begins: "By reason of my indisposition . . . I cannot write this with my own hand," which is not an altogether encouraging sign of authenticity. It is against the trend of another letter of Persons of two months before which reveals quite casually that he has neglected to provide a channel of communication with John Cecil, and shows no anxiety to repair the neglect. In short, it is the production of John Cecil, whose subsequent record as a witness against Persons is notoriously unreliable.

But the point is that whether it was faked or genuine, whether Lord Burghley believed it or not, it was equally bad for Ferdinando. Consider what was happening that same year to Sir John Perrot, a great public servant and a sturdy Protestant. On the bare word of another renegade priest, the spy Denis O'Roghan, who received a life-pension of £40 for his services, on the strength of a letter that was "a manifest forgery" (*D.N.B.*), he was accused of conspiring with the King of Spain and Sir William Stanley; and after a year in the Tower, with his "memory impaired through grief and close confinement," he was sentenced to the traitor's death in June 1592.¹

¹ Cf. Tenison: *Elizabethan England*, IX. 84. He died with the sentence in suspense.

Nothing like that, of course, happened to Ferdinando. The John Cecil letter was never used in public. But it was kept. And in the spy-world, always eager for a new line of information, its muffled echoes appear to have spread. "All the Stanleys in England," the notorious Topcliffe is reported as saying in 1592, "are traitors."

In the Christmastide of 1591-2, when Ferdinando's players were presenting Shakespeare before the Queen, Allen was writing to Persons that John Cecil's treachery was now a certain fact. Had they really been guilty of the John Cecil letter, their only cue now was silence and extreme caution. But what happens in fact is that the espionage wires begin to hum with reports about Lord Strange and Sir William Stanley. "There is certainly intelligence between Strange and the Cardinal," wrote the spy Robinson (*vere Barnes*) to Phelippes from Brussels on June 13, 1592. In the following year, one William Goldsmith, having posed successfully as a Catholic in Rome "whereby I might have liberty to come amongst their wicked traitorous devotions," managed to procure some strictly non-committal letters of introduction from Cardinal Allen and his secretary to Sir William Stanley and to Dr. Worthington, a Catholic divine in Brussels. Armed with these and with some gossip about Catholic hopes for Lord Strange, he hastened back to England, to Sir Robert Cecil, confident of a not unfriendly reception. In the same month, June 1593, the Portuguese spy Andrada, who lived on second-hand pickings, wrote to Burghley that Sir William Stanley was "determined to send into the kingdom a person of much understanding who can cause disturbance."¹

This is the time and place, Brussels in the summer of 1593, in which Lord Burghley set his first version of the Hesketh Plot—a year after Hesketh's execution and six months after Ferdinando's death.²

On March 25th, runs Burghley's version, Hesketh was instructed by Stanley and Worthington to offer "a hallowed

¹ *Calendar of Hatfield MSS.* IV. 330 and 335.

² *Ibid.* V. 58, 59. This, it should be noted, is not Camden's later story, but a quite different version, perhaps a rough draft, which was never published. The difference concerns Ferdinando's complicity. In *Sadler Papers*, III. 20, there is a very clever, ambiguous propaganda-version (date: about 1596) which may well be the intermediary between Burghley's first version which asserted Ferdinando's guilt, and Camden's later account which denied it.

crown" to Lord Strange, and to incite him to rebel and depose the Queen. Between April and September, it continues, Hesketh wrote from Brussels to Rome and received directions and encouragement from Cardinal Allen. He then set out from Hamburg for England, and came to Lord Strange, then Earl of Derby, "*and persuaded him,*" it concludes unequivocally, "*to undertake the same.*"

Passing over, for the present, Burghley's charge against Derby, and considering only that against Allen, we find the only known letter that Allen wrote to the Low Countries that summer was of a very different nature. It was known to Burghley, for it was intercepted, and he endorsed it. Its entitlement in Strype is:

Cardinal Allen . . . upon report of a treaty between England and Spain to endeavour a liberty of religion for the Catholics. August 14, 1593.

It was intercepted because the peace offer made to Allen was not genuine; one of the messengers concerned in it was the notorious spy Robert Poley who had lately been present at the slaying of Christopher Marlowe.

A feigned peace offer to conceal a hostile thrust was an accepted political trick. But Allen was so anxious for this offer to be genuine that he half-believed it. To his correspondent, Richard Hopkins, an exile of high repute who had received the message, he wrote:

Only we want good grounds of Her Majesty's intention and good acceptation of our travails therein; which if you can by writing or other equivalent means obtain, let me alone for the rest, promising mine own pains without exception, and not much doubting but that His Holiness will most favourably and earnestly employ his authority for the same.

In its entirety it is a noble letter. Indeed, no one who has studied Allen has ever doubted the pathos and sincerity of this, the last, year of his mortal life. He knew that a settlement would mean his own eclipse, for he had gone too far against the Queen, but he was eager to lay down his life for it, if it would mean true peace and freedom for his flock.

The natural impulse would be to reject decisively Burghley's accusation against him—made after his death, be it noted. But

if one does that, the alternative seems so fantastic. The alternative is that Burghley himself, or someone near him, was the contriver of Hesketh's mission to England. One hesitates to accept this, if only from the less worthy fear of being thought a crank.

So perhaps the best thing will be not to jump to either conclusion—for this is a complex affair—but to follow, next month, Hesketh's movements in England. For it is certain that he did arrive in England in September, and it is equally certain that he arrived with a government permission or passport perfectly in order.

But—as has been said—this is a complex affair.

(To be continued.)

PÈRE LAMY

By

C. C. MARTINDALE

THE PHENOMENA of the mystical life are extremely varied, and it would be rash to dismiss any unusual experience as unauthentic simply because it seems to us odd or even repulsive. The history of Père Lamy seems to be provoking increased interest, at least among the devout; and it is partly because of its extreme unlikeness to that of Padre Pio, of whom something was written in THE MONTH for last June, that it is outlined here. Padre Pio has experienced the stigmata, but has never said (so far as we know) anything like the almost unparalleled statements made by Père Lamy, who was not a stigmatic. We venture to say at the outset what we shall repeat when ending—we cannot exclude the possibility of an experience being supernatural in origin, and yet described wholly in language suitable to the recipient. Some ecstasies are unable to say anything while in ecstasy; others, like Blessed Angela of Foligno, said much, and what they said was taken down verbatim by a secretary; but then, as the Beata (in hearing the record read) cried out,

"It wasn't *at all* like that!" Others, like Père Lamy, describe their experiences in detail, but in terms so totally different from what Saints chiefly use, yet so completely in harmony with their personality, that we cannot help being impressed. We certainly think Père Lamy must have been a very holy man as well as a heroic worker. As for his narratives, we must leave them to the judgment of wiser men than we are.

The only source of information about Père Lamy that I know is his *Life* by Comte Biver, translated by the late Mgr. J. O'Connor.¹ There is a preface by M. J. Maritain, who knew Père Lamy well. In it he stresses the priest's "fine natural gifts of intelligence and common sense, of practical wisdom and understanding"—important, in view of the abnormal experiences that also were his. The book can hardly be called a "Life"; it consists of records of what Père Lamy himself said to Comte Biver, connected by explanatory sentences added by the Count. Also, especially towards the end of the book, there are paragraphs by a young disciple of the priest's "blended" with the discourses. These are followed by disconnected notes about graces obtained through his prayers, and prophecies or anecdotes told in slightly different versions. I think, however, that the account of the conversations must be trustworthy, if only because M. Maritain is not a man to be easily taken in, nor yet was "Father Brown." Besides, Père Lamy's way of talking is so personal and quaint, and is so self-consistent throughout, that I think it impossible for any one reporter (let alone several) to have invented or substantially modified it.²

Jean-Edouard Lamy was born on 23rd June, 1853, at Le Pailly

¹ Clonmore and Reynolds, second edition 1951.

² I would say the same of the conversations of Aloysius Horn: indeed, Père Lamy keeps reminding me of that shrewd old Liverpool-African traveller. Still, since we must always ask for the evidence and assess its value, I may quote as an example of the extreme difficulty of ensuring the accuracy of evidence, the recent reprinting of two out of three photographs allegedly taken of the "solar phenomenon" which occurred at Fatima at noon on 13th October, 1918. These were first printed, so far as I know, in the 1927 edition of Canon Formigão's *Great Marvels of Fatima*, and show the sun as near the horizon, which it could not have been at noon. These photographs, when reprinted in a well-known periodical, were described as "rigorously authentic." But, after due enquiry, we learn that while they are real photographs, far from being pictures of the miracle, they represent a *sunset* and were taken on 13th May, 1921, near Torres Novas, and professed to suggest merely certain atmospheric conditions "not unlike" those prevailing at Fatima on 13th October, 1918. This was afterwards made quite clear in *The Voice of Fatima*, 13th January, 1952.

in the diocese of Langres. The account of French peasant-life at that time is charming. But his home was burnt down in 1869. He began his military service in 1875, and became corporal and sergeant. He had hoped to be a priest, but as the seminaries were apparently full, he became an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales and was put to lead the Youth Movement at Troyes, and remained at this work amid incredible oppositions (not only anti-clerical) and in complete poverty till 1892, though he was ordained in Paris in December 1886. He became curate at St.-Ouen; then, in 1900, parish priest at La Courneuve, where he remained for over twenty-six years. He attempted to found a society, "Servants of Jesus and Mary," and after many disappointments obtained, by way of the Archbishop of Tours, an approbation of it from Rome. However, it came to nothing.¹ In 1923 he had to retire, partly because of failing eye-sight, but also as he said, because his faculties were weakening. He then went to a rest-house in Paris, though spending the summer months in his childhood's region of Le Pailly, where he worked in his little garden. He died on 1st December, 1931, at the home of Count Biver. This record of truly epic heroism, carried on sometimes in situations as bad as any native compounds that we have seen in Africa, is related throughout in the same quaint, naïve, abrupt style. The Abbé is half-rueful; half-laughing at himself. Often you realize that he is *remembering* what he does not think of *telling* us or explaining—as though I were to say to a non-Londoner, "I had to pass through foggy Trafalgar Square: you couldn't see Nelson." The Abbé, in short, is, with simplicity, saying what he remembers; he is not putting together a story for listeners.

But in exactly the same objective style he tells how from boyhood upwards he had preternatural experiences, though from the end of the first Great War these are said to have lessened, save communications with the angels to whom he was specially attached, as Blessed Peter Fabre was. An instance or two:

"Nothing is so faithful as an angel. What a memory! He remembers everything. He tells you what was done ten years ago as if it

¹ Père Lamy's Congregation of the Servants of Jesus and Mary, dispersed in 1939-40, received a new approbation from Rome on 1st December, 1941, and has settled in what survives of the very ancient Cistercian monastery of Ourscamp in the diocese of Beauvais. It is at present a centre of study and worship; its aim, the re-Christianization of the boys of the people, cannot be attained till its numbers are greater.

were yesterday. . . . The angels have bodies that are not of our sphere. Each angel has his own face. The figures in which the angels show themselves to our eyes have often black hair and their hair is well cut. I have never seen curly hair among the angels. . . . The archangel Gabriel has his hair well cut and wavy. . . . They are like athletes. Their garments are white, but a white that has nothing earthly about it. I cannot describe it, because it is in no way comparable to our colour of white." He had said that the upper part of their bodies was covered with "gold plates" which "glitter in every direction, with a constant coming and going of light. They get light from God."

Lucifer is tall, with quite a good-looking face, bony, bearded. . . . He has the build of a very solid man of strong cut. (Flames climb zigzagging up him.) The most numerous are black as burning pitch, the others are ordinary tongues of fire, like the fire of that lamp over there. . . . The nature of those spirits, even when fallen, is so remarkable. Our thought is hidden from them but they can so easily guess it. What scorn he has for those who yield to his temptation. I have never seen mockery like Lucifer's. Once he was looking at some pious souls . . . and said "That's the worst liar of the three" (pointing at the best dressed woman). I was extremely surprised to hear him say that. . . . I was lent a book to read, called *Under the Sky of Satan* [by Bernanos]. But you cannot struggle with Satan. . . . I repeat, *Under the Sky of Satan*, it is false. These writers have imagination. That can never get near the reality. . . . Before the holy archangel gave me warning, I did not think much of what I was doing when insulting Lucifer. You must not irritate even a bad archangel; you must respect the work of God [the Abbé laughed]. . . . I said to him, "Ah, you dirty beast!" St. Gabriel said to me, "Don't forget, he is an archangel! Don't argue. Respect Lucifer, he is an archangel that failed" . . . You must respect the Creator's masterpiece even in its destruction. . . . If you set about giving him deed for deed, it's a real tinker's fight. When you respect his angelic character, you hurt him a great deal more."

Père Lamy believes of course in angels. He knows that they have not bodies like the real bodies of Our Lord and His Mother. Still, he visualizes them, and yet by no means according to the art-forms usual then or even now. "I have never seen them with wings. They always look like young men." True, this resembles the gospel apparitions; but, like most mystics who visualize spiritual presences, he keeps transferring what he sees into something un-earthly. Their gold cuirasses get their light from God:

their white clothes (like Our Lord's during the transfiguration) are of no mundane whiteness. Having startled us by describing Satan as a strong good-looking man (though that is how he has been painted in the Catacombs) he startles us still more by bidding us respect God's ruined masterpiece, though I do not think he was likely to recall St. Jude, 9, where it is said that the archangel Michael "dared bring against him [the devil] no railing accusation." For all his quaintness, the Abbé may seem to see deeper and act more wisely than those Saints, even, who have merely derided Satan.¹

Quite early, at Troyes, St. Joseph appeared to him, encouraging him to be a priest, though at the time this seemed impossible:

He appeared standing on the floor. . . . He was lit with his own light. The Saint was in his glory; not in his great glory; in his milder glory. As I saw him, he must be no more than sixty years of age. His beard was like his hair: he is not bald, but going very grey. He wore a brown suit . . . a rough strong-looking material. . . . The Blessed Virgin speaks of him as "my holy husband," and the word "holy" in her mouth is something to remark.

Evidently I can select only a few of the strangest (yet most characteristic) records. At Gray, on 9th September, 1909, while he was saying Mass,

The Blessed Virgin appeared to me suddenly, and at the same time the devil. . . . She came down from the ceiling . . . so gently, so gently. She was as if in a furnace of light. Her glory went through everything gradually. The candles, the chalice, the altar vestments and myself, like sun going through water. How far did the glory reach? You need not know what the glory of God is, when you think of what He gives to the dearest of His creatures. . . . When she uncrossed her hands, it seemed to make an eddy round her. . . . She said to Lucifer: "Is that you?" "I have leave from the Father." "So be it. You know how to obey the Father?" He gave no answer, but I felt crushed. She extinguished her glory. The lesser glory never left her all during the Mass.

On 18th May, 1912, at Courneuve, in the evening, the Abbé had gone to clean the church and had a blue apron round his waist, "very patched; not that I was actually ragged, but I was poorly dressed and with an old biretta." Some boys had left bits

¹ When he says that each angel has his "own face," can he possibly be recalling St. Thomas's view that each angel is a separate "species"?

of newspaper on the floor: he leaned on a harmonium to say a Hail Mary.

The blessed Archangel said to me, "Look out, you are going to pray before the Virgin Mary." I was on all fours gathering up those papers. The Blessed Virgin was there in the middle of the Saints and me in that nice attitude. She said to the Saints about her: "Stay! There he is!" I didn't know where to put myself. I wanted to sink into the ground. I took off my biretta, but as for the apron, I pulled the strings, but the more I pulled the tighter they got. She said to the Saints around her, "No, but he minds too much." And later on I said to myself, "Well, Heaven is not an ill-tempered country!" But she sees every detail. She did not mind seeing me in that frightful rag. . . . I wanted to get my apron off. That was my great preoccupation in her presence. . . . Still, I spoke to the Blessed Virgin. What she said interested me; what I said to her perhaps interested her or she had the goodness to look as if it did.¹

He considered our Lady wore a deep-blue gown. "Catherine Emmerich gives her sixty-four years. I think a little older, sixty-six, but I could not tell her age from how she looks." "A lady sculptor made me a Blessed Virgin with her head inclined. 'Why so, madame?' 'It gives her a mystical air.' 'No, no. She has no mystical air. . . . She looks you straight in the face; and that is how it should be.'" He says again and again that she is "quite little." "The angels are a great deal better as a spectacle than the Blessed Virgin. They look like brilliant officers beside her, who is so simple. When she shows herself with what I call her great glory, she is a little frightening . . . my description of her is when she gives only her lesser glory."

It was chiefly while saying Mass that Père Lamy was conscious of our Lord. "Very rarely He has an aureole; you could not bear His glory." The wounds were in the wrists [compare the Shroud of Turin]: the thorns made a "hood," a "bush," a "basket upside down," rather than a crown. He had two special visions of our Lord crucified—each time when he was angry. Once a band of boys "from a revolutionary family, reds, and all that's reddest," were stealing pears from his orchard. He crawled through the long

¹ M. Maritain says that the Abbé often related this episode to him. He had not known that our Lady had come down among a crowd of angels and saints till the Archangel warned him, "The Queen of Heaven is here." Confused because of the state he was in, he gave a shake of his elbow as though to say, "Only see what a state I am in!" The Blessed Virgin, smiling to the Saints round about her, said, "His humility makes him rather shy."

grass, and then ran after them brandishing a rake, and crying, "You rascals, wait!" Then Our Lord appeared, on the Cross, but *not* as though on Calvary. "He did not want me to strike the boys." The boys ran away, but called out, "Jesus is there with the curé," but they ran all the faster. The other vision occurred when some children were making a noise during Mass, and the Abbé knocked on the altar to quiet them. It was in connection with our Lord's apparitional presence on the altar that the Abbé made one of his rare and not very successful attempts to explain the "how" of what he saw—in this case, Our Lord lying beneath both corporal and Host. It was as when "you see yourself in a pail of water. Matter has no resistance, whether it is wood or stone. Matter does not cease to be so, but it lets itself be penetrated." If Our Lord was standing, and "following" Mass, He would disappear just before the Communion, so that the "vision" should not disturb the sacramental act.

The Abbé said firmly that no one should build his life on visions, "especially someone else's," but, as he grew older, apparently saw less but spoke more openly. He read some notes to a priest-friend, who exclaimed, "But it is *you* who is in this. . . . It must be well-founded." Père Lamy said it was *very* well founded! "What especially astounded the late bishop of Langres is, I believe, that dialogue between Mary and Lucifer, and also the somewhat candid style of the conversation." "She speaks as she chooses. She is not high-falutin'. She said to me: 'I am coming into the family circle.'"

I think we here reach an important point. We eliminate any idea that this incredibly hard-working priest, devoted, all his earlier life, to the apostolate of young hooligans,¹ and then to a frightful parish which, during the first War, became a centre for refugees, prisoners, the wounded, and the scene of an appalling explosion, was a deliberate liar, or even a conscious romancer. Nor do we admit the assumption that anyone who thinks he sees or hears what not everyone else does, *must* have a sort of hypertrophied imagination, or be the victim of hysteria, a word

¹ I presume that when Mgr. O'Connor wrote "rag-pickers," he was translating *chiffonniers*. This recalls a very old book (read by us about 1899) *La Charité Privée à Paris*, by M. de la Gorce, where the *Oeuvre des Chiffonniers* played a great part. But "rag-pickers" is too specified a word to describe the unspeakable degradation of the boys for whom Abbé Lamy worked so long—he thought, so fruitlessly.

rapidly being widened to cover any form of unusual experience. Indeed, all the alleged psycho-physical predispositions to such experiences are being one after the other eliminated.

The Catholic seems brought back to two possibilities. Either God grants a special communication to a recipient, *and* impresses on his senses the forms in which he is to "see" or "hear" what is given; or, He communicates Himself to the "innermost" of the soul (as they say), foreknowing that the recipient will clothe the gift in forms or words already at his disposition. In fact, an analogy may be drawn from Scriptural inspiration, where God moves a man to write in the way in which alone he *can* write; or a comparison can be made with *The Little World of Don Camillo*, containing an enchanting priest, an anti-clerical mayor, and the altar-crucifix which speaks to Don Camillo exactly as his own conscience would; and, for all I know, the author implied just that—that it *was* the priest's own conscience—if indeed he meant more than to tell a charming story! As Père Lamy reminds us in his normal life of Aloysius Horn, so, in his preternatural life, he reminds us of Don Camillo!

Starting, then, not from his visions, but his virtues and amazing influence, not least during his last years of retirement, we are not at all surprised if indeed he received even from boyhood a direct divine influx into his soul. The probability of this is increased by his visions, so often occurring when he was least expecting them; by the combination in his narratives of what his imagination might naturally supply, and of what one would suppose it never would or could; and, further, by his frequent inability to express exactly what he meant (e.g., the "greater" and "lesser" glory of our Lady or St. Joseph: "white" which wasn't *our* "white"), not to mention his freedom from, and, indeed, disgusted rejection of, prevalent art-forms.

When he was ten, he saw on a hill about two miles away a lamb, standing up and holding a cross with a pennant attached. "You could see his eyes perfectly. It was a very fine lamb. Distance makes no difference to those things. . . . Nanette [a small companion], said it was a bad sign. Why? I don't know at all, so I told her it wasn't." Now it was the vigil of the Baptist. His godfather (an influence in his life) was Jean-Baptiste. The Baptist's feast was "special" for him. And when in later years he was shown a copy of Van Eyck's "Mystical Lamb," he said, "It was just like

that," but, after all, the symbol is a very common one. Here, I think, external influences may have affected the form of the vision. The verbal "suggestion" would, of course, be the Baptist's emphasis on "Agnus Dei."

However, this does not at all disvalue the reality of what was perceived. Who has not known children who instantly visualized what they thought? They could not distinguish between their "picture" and material reality (probably their nurses told them they were wicked little liars).¹

Hence I think that God may well have given direct knowledge to Père Lamy; that He may well have done so knowing that the simple but extremely spiritual-minded priest would "describe" the gift in "his" way; and that he may also have proceeded to decorate his gift no less in his own way. The more *terre à terre* Père Lamy's descriptions, the more I am convinced of the supernaturality of the gift, and I hope it is not fanciful to see, in the pencil-drawing of this heavy, drooping old priest, a child-like spirituality, and recollectedness, such as one immediately discerned in Blessed Pius X even when he was laughing, during a private audience to which we were privileged to be admitted.

¹ Others use other senses. I remember quoting Keats, "I cannot see what flowers are at my feet"—which he then instantly names. An eminent doctor said to me, "But he *smelt* them, as my wife would." He then said, challenging me, that she had returned to London one evening in October (I think), and had said, "Why does the whole town smell of lilac?" I said, "She was fond of Walt Whitman." It was true. She had seen, almost unknowingly, placards announcing "Death of President X." Her mind went straight back to Whitman's famous poem on the death of Abraham Lincoln; but recurrent items in that poem were the moon and the lilac-bough. What her consciousness retained was a *scent*. One could quote instances of African natives picking a herb in a pitch-dark wood. How? No one could have seen it, and no European could have smelt it.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ROGER BACON¹

THE FAME OF ROGER BACON is one of the curiosities of history. For centuries after his death his memory lived on both in popular legend and in the byways of learning. Samuel Butler who was equally at home in both fields could write in *Hudibras* of "old Hodge Bacon and Bob Grosted," so that even his connection with the great Bishop of Lincoln was not forgotten. Samuel Jebb produced the first edition of the *Opus Majus* early in the reign of George II, which is surprising enough, and it was reprinted at Venice in 1750, which is even more remarkable. But it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century with Brewer's publication of the *Opera Inedita* in 1859 and E. Charles' biography in 1861 that Bacon came into his own as a thinker. He was not only recognized as one of the most original minds of his age, he was hailed as an assertor of the freedom of thought in an age of authority, a martyr of science and a prophet of modern ideas. The closer and more accurate study of Bacon's thought which has been made possible by the work of scholars like Robert Steele and A. G. Little during the last fifty years has shown the errors and anachronisms of these views and has proved that Roger Bacon was in many respects a traditionalist of the traditionalists. Consequently there has in recent years been a sharp reaction to the extravagant claims of Bacon's admirers. The originality of his ideas has been denied and his reputation has been subjected to that process of "debunking" from which so many of the great men of the past from Cicero to Cardinal Manning have suffered during the last generation.

The new biography of Roger Bacon by an American scholar, Mr. Stewart Easton, is strongly influenced by these tendencies. Although he has studied the work of Bacon and the thought of his age with scrupulous care, in his interpretation he follows the characteristic technique of the debunking school, viz., the construction of a psychological hypothesis which is then made the criterion by which the documents and the facts of the patient's life history must be judged.

In the present case Mr. Easton finds the key to Bacon's career in "his subconscious realization that he had made a wrong decision" when "early in his career he had opted for philosophy alone," instead of taking his degree in theology. Hence he was dogged throughout his career by a subconscious sense of inferiority to the theologians and a conscious resentment against their pretensions. And so his "fantastic

¹ *Roger Bacon and His Search for a Universal Science: A Reconsideration of the Work of Roger Bacon in the Light of His Own Stated Purposes*, by Stewart C. Easton (Basil Blackwell 25s).

effort to acquire knowledge of all the sciences" and to use them in the field of theology was an attempt to "become a theologian by the back door" and to prove that he was right and that the rest of the world was wrong.

Nevertheless it was not Bacon's criticism of the theologians nor yet his scientific and philosophical theories that were responsible for his suspension from teaching and his subsequent imprisonment. In these matters he was regarded, according to Mr. Easton, as a relatively unimportant crank and the real reason for his condemnation is to be found in his apocalyptic views which show that he had ranged himself on the side of the heterodox Spirituals in the great controversy which divided the Franciscan Order in the middle of the thirteenth century. But if this is so, why does Bacon never refer to the Spirituals or to his part in the controversy? Here again Mr. Easton resorts to psychological arguments. According to him Bacon shifts the ground to scientific issues because

this exalts his own contributions and makes them unique and himself more interesting and important as a lone investigator in possession of the truth. This is a piece of psychological self defence. . . . Few convictions are more comforting to us than the certainty that we are right and the rest of the world is wrong; and if we suffer for it, that is a part of the painful pleasure involved. But if we are merely one of a crowd, punished for an indiscreet tongue or a petty infraction of discipline, there is little enough romantic in that, and we prefer to convince ourselves and inform the world as publicly as possible that we are persecuted for righteousness sake. We could not have been wrong or perverse or misguided, oh no!

The worst of this argument is that it will not stand even on its own shaky foundations. If Roger Bacon were indeed a supporter of the Franciscan Spirituals (which we have little right to suppose) he would surely feel himself no less of a martyr than if he were persecuted for his scientific opinions. And given Bacon's temperament it is a psychological impossibility that so outspoken and voluminous a writer should have kept silence on an issue which was the burning question in his Order and in his age. No doubt it is true that he had apocalyptic views, but so had St. Bonaventure himself and very many of his contemporaries. But we have no reason whatever to suppose that Bacon shared the characteristic views of the Spirituals on the key issue of poverty, while in regard to the question of learning it is clear that his whole life and work are diametrically opposed to pious obscurantism of the Spirituals who held that "Paris had destroyed Assisi."

In the same way Mr. Easton's hypothesis on the psychological

origins of Bacon's anti-theological complex rests on very slender foundations. We do not even know for certain that he did not graduate in theology and P. Glorieux has actually included his name in his *Répertoire des maîtres de théologie* which is the standard authority. In any case there is nothing in Bacon's writings to suggest that he suffered from any sense of theological inferiority. No thirteenth-century thinker goes further in the exaltation of theology as the queen of the sciences and the only source of true wisdom. His attempt to integrate all branches of knowledge into a single structure of universal wisdom is no more anti-theological than St. Bonaventure's "reduction of the arts to theology" which is inspired by a similar ideal. In this as in other respects Mr. Easton's misjudgement of Bacon is due to an oversimplified view of the development of medieval thought which makes the great Dominican teachers the only authentic representatives of thirteenth-century theology, and consequently he believes that Bacon's criticism of St. Albert and St. Thomas are a proof of his "really abysmal ignorance" of contemporary theological studies, so that he did not even know enough to attack the theologians intelligently. But in reality Bacon was writing in an age of controversy when the theologians themselves were sharply divided and even St. Thomas himself appeared in the eyes of the theologians to be a dangerous innovator and an adversary to the traditional philosophy.

Now in most of the questions at issue, such as the multiplicity of substantial forms, the dependence of human reason on divine illumination, and the independence of philosophy from theology, Roger Bacon's views are those of the theologians of his order, St. Bonaventure, Archbishop Peckham and William de la Mare. Even his scientific and philological interests, his study of perspective and his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew go back to the same tradition and especially to the founders of the Oxford Franciscan school, Robert Grosseteste and Adam Marsh. It is true, as Mr. Easton says, that this was an ancient tradition, which can be traced back perhaps in some degree to the school of Chartres in the twelfth century. But this does not mean that it was moribund and out of date when Bacon wrote. It was just as representative of the living thought of the age as the tradition of Christian Aristotelianism, and Bacon's own writings show that it contained the seeds of further development.

The fact is that these two traditions represent two different approaches to the same problem. St. Thomas and Roger Bacon were both equally concerned with the question of how the new Aristotelian and Arabic learning was to be integrated with the theological teaching of the Western Church, but while the former conceived the problem in terms of metaphysics and logic, the latter was concerned above all with the need for a complete reform of the study of the liberal arts—the

traditional *trivium* and *quadrivium*—in terms of the new scientific knowledge that was being introduced into Christendom from the East. There was nothing startlingly original in this programme. Robert Grosseteste, on the one hand, and St. Albert on the other, had been working on the same lines. What distinguishes Bacon from all the other thinkers of his age is the practical and experimental character of his work. He related the reform of studies directly to the needs of humanity and regarded science as the predestined instrument by which and by which alone the Church could fulfil her mission of uniting the human race and guiding it in the way of salvation.

All knowledge was one, given by one God to one human race for one end, but although the whole of this divine revelation was contained in the Scriptures, it was impossible to understand it without the subordinate sciences of grammar and philosophy and the scientific study of texts. In the same way although "the end of all true philosophy is to arrive at a knowledge of the Creator through the knowledge of the created world," it is impossible to do this without the study of the mathematical sciences, "for he who knows not mathematics cannot know any other sciences, and what is more, he cannot discover his own ignorance or find its proper remedies." Finally to perfect the work of science and to apply it to its proper end, the guidance of the world, we need another new kind of science—experimental science—which is the most perfect of them all. For without this science there is a gap between theory and practice, between philosophy and life, which prevents the sciences from producing their fruit. For experimental science gives man not only a more certain knowledge, it also gives him power to change his life and to control the world. Armed with this weapon the Church will be the mistress of the world in fact and not merely in principle. She will no longer have to fear the attacks of the infidels nor rely on the bloody and uncertain methods of war and crusades. By the reform of studies and the application of science to life the world will be made one and the unity of science will bear fruit in the unity of a universal Christian society.

It is easy to point out the utopian elements in this programme, but there is nothing in it to lead us to suppose that Bacon was animated by an unconscious theological inferiority sense. On the contrary it is essentially a theological utopia, and Bacon's criticisms of contemporary theologians are not directed against their theological views, but against their neglect of positive theology and their absorption in the discussion of metaphysical problems which did not really belong to the province of theology. Bacon's impatience with the one-sided intellectualism of Parisian scholasticism and his violent and unjust criticisms of the great Dominicans are so easy to explain in the light of his own principles and ideals that there is no need to invoke any

obscure psychological motives. He had the vision of a new world of knowledge and power which was ripe for conquest and he was exasperated at seeing the intellectual energies that were needed for this essential task being squandered on the endless cycle of dialectical controversy.

Against the purely logical and metaphysical culture of the "vulgus philosophantium Parisi," Bacon appeals to what seems to him the wider and deeper learning of his own people—the "anglicani qui satis inter alios homines sunt et fuerunt studiosi,"—and above all to their two greatest representatives, Robert Grosseteste and Adam Marsh, who were "the greatest clerks in the world and the most perfect in science, human and divine."

But Mr. Easton, not content with debunking Roger Bacon, is also prepared to dispute the value of this personal testimony and of the tradition to which it bears witness. He believes that Little's views on the Oxford Franciscan school are without foundation and that Grosseteste's teaching to the Friars was purely theological and did not include the arts of the *quadrivium*. Above all he argues that there is no reason to believe that Adam Marsh was proficient in mathematics or natural science. His later reputation rests almost entirely on Bacon's statements, and Bacon himself was probably actuated by ulterior motives, since he was "perhaps Roger's only friend in high places," and his name would have carried weight with the Pope whom Bacon desired to influence.

Against this strange view I think one might legitimately appeal to the psychological argument and say that Roger Bacon was much too naïve and outspoken a character to employ such tactics. But apart from this argument, Adam Marsh was too well known as a teacher among Bacon's contemporaries in the clergy to allow Bacon to get away with a complete misrepresentation of his ideas. It is as though Fr. Tyrrell had written to Pope Pius X attributing his own views on Biblical criticism to Father Peter Gallwey! Moreover even in Bacon's own lifetime a contemporary, Fra Salimbene, also wrote of Adam Marsh as "one of the most illustrious clerks in the world" who "wrote of many things like the Bishop of Lincoln."

Here, I think, Mr. Easton not only fails to prove his point, but reveals the besetting faults of the debunking system—its forcing of the evidence in the interests of a psychological hypothesis and its arbitrary use of the *argumentum e silentio*. It is quite exceptional under medieval conditions to find better first-hand evidence than Bacon's numerous references to the scientific qualifications of Adam Marsh, and it is absurd to dismiss them because Thomas of Eccleston, who was writing on a different subject and had no interest in scientific questions, does not say the same.

If anything is certain in the history of thirteenth-century thought, it is that the intellectual tradition of Robert Grosseteste was transmitted to the English Franciscans at Oxford both directly and through the medium of Adam Marsh, and that Roger Bacon himself was the most distinguished, if also the most eccentric, representative of this tradition. Thus I believe that Mr. Easton's re-examination of the evidence has done little to invalidate the late A. G. Little's thesis, while with regard to the wider question of Roger Bacon's place in medieval thought Professor Gilson's brilliant and carefully weighed judgment in the last edition of *La Philosophie au Moyen Age* still remains unshaken.

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

REVIEWS

STUDIES IN MYSTICISM

Ste. Thérèse d'Avila: Le Livre des Fondations. Translation by Marcelle Auclair (Desclée de Brouwer 195 frs.).

Ste. Thérèse Mystique, by Marcel Lépée (Desclée de Brouwer 175 frs. b.).

The Story of a Soul. A new translation of *Ste. Thérèse de Lisieux's* autobiography, by Fr. Michael Day of the Oratory (Burns and Oates 10s 6d).

Three Mystics: St. Teresa of Avila; St. John of the Cross; El Greco. Edited by Fr. Bruno of Jesus and Mary (Sheed and Ward 25s).

Bérulle, by Jean Dagens (Desclée de Brouwer 240 frs. b.).

DR. G. MARAÑÓN of the Royal Academy of Spain writes of the twofold life of St. Teresa, the practical and the mystical; and those who love her may be well advised to read of the former in her Book of Foundations before risking the deep seas of her super-human existence. And M. Roland Manuel, in his preface, shows how Mme. Auclair has been true to St. Teresa's vivacity, variety and preference for calling a spade a spade, most of which disappeared beneath the unctuous pens of earlier translators. Even we, who possess Professor Allison Peers's magistral work, can profit by reading St. Teresa in French, for what has become unnoticeable in English through familiarity may positively startle when read in some other language, as, for example, the New Testament. The authoress travelled to each of St. Teresa's foundations along with Mlle. Y. Chevalier who provides fifty-seven admirable photographs; but we could dispense with most of the interiors showing Carmelites posed at work or recreation: unbelievably, there is no picture of Avila as a city! We fear that the

frontispiece-portrait is somewhat "softened." St. Teresa was more rugged!

M. Lépée's book gives a vivid account of Teresa's environment and exterior life and also of her mystical states: but since the Saint herself has to struggle with words to express herself, no wonder the author finds no less difficulty: St. Paul, indeed, is reduced to paradox, and says that he heard "speech unspeakable." Part of the marvel of St. Teresa is her self-possession and self-analysis: there is, really, a deep difference between her and St. John of the Cross, who prefers to brush aside all apparently supernatural experiences—if they were genuine, they would do their work in the soul independently of the recipient. Not that he *could* disregard them any more than he could wholly get rid of "images": his poetry is nothing but images, and he was, too, an artist. The last part of the book contains selected passages from St. Teresa's writings: we regret the absence of an index of the more important proper names.

The Story of a Soul keeps close to the original arrangement of St. Thérèse's manuscript; and we expect Fr. Day was right in omitting many of her diminutives and interjections, which might be rather irritating in English. But if, as Mgr. V. Johnson says in his foreword, this text ought to be published by itself, apart from other documents, perhaps the Prologue could have been longer: for though we read, here, the Saint's own commentary, so to say, on her life, she naturally could not criticize her father, a difficult man, and, still less, her superiors or fellow-sisters, from whom she had much to suffer. In fact, while the Saint insists on her "little way," we must not imagine any easy-going spiritual life or comfortable conditions: her sufferings were in fact appalling, and her method of self-disregard and acceptance had to be used in circumstances such as few of us could endure. *They* were not "little," though the "way" she pursued among them may have seemed to her little compared with the heroic penances of many a great Saint. But the translator conveys to us the *naïveté* and sweet freshness of her soul.

There is no need to recommend a book edited by the Carmelite Fr. Bruno of Jesus and Mary. He writes a brief preface about St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross; M. Bernard Champigneulle has some penetrating pages on the Cretan El Greco. Other short commentaries are explanatory of the pictures. This is no place to discuss El Greco's art, and hardly whether a man who had no claim to sanctity could be called a mystic. To my mind, the name is justified if we realize the *intensity* of the Spanish soul which subdued to itself Flemish and Italian art alike. El Greco was perfectly able to draw real portraits and even normal anatomy, yet in the very eyes of the noblemen contemplating the funeral of the Count d'Orgaz the dark flame smoulders; in

picture after picture of Toledo he transfigures that spiritual centre of Spain all but into the heavenly Jerusalem; and, after all, it is not only in El Greco that the tragedy of the Passion and the tumultuous splendour of the Resurrection are to be seen, as picture after picture in this book reminds us. Perhaps the most extraordinary is the Crucifix drawn by St. John of the Cross, which cannot but have influenced the famous Crucifix by Dali, now in Glasgow.

M. Dagens has expended a vast erudition over his *Bérulle*; and though he does not seem to make of Bérulle the coryphaeus of the *Ecole Française* (which rather wearies us in Bremond), the shock of changing from a Spanish to a French atmosphere is extraordinary. One realizes it best when reading about the introduction of Spanish Carmelites into France (spiritually due to Mme. Acarie, whatever may have been the material part played by Bérulle even when Superior of the Carmelite nuns). The indomitable Mother Anne de Jésus detested France and especially Henri IV: she saw France as almost all Calvinist: "nearly all the inhabitants of these villages were heretics, which one could anyhow see by just looking at them, for they really had the faces of the damned." Not all the bishops themselves were Catholics. However, she saw traces of good—some secular superiors were "very Catholic"—a quaintly Anglican-sounding expression. Even Anne de St.-Barthélemy, so modest and obedient, finally followed Anne de Jésus into Flanders—yet they longed to die in Spain, "among Catholics": "God and my soul are there." In a chapter on Bérulle and Controversy, we find that public discussions between Protestants and Catholics were encouraged; but both sides were too polemical and merely *attacked*: I forget what Jesuit was denounced for not being sufficiently truculent and sarcastic. But Bérulle seems on the whole to have spoken "to the heart." With relief we turn to St. Francis of Sales! At first Bérulle's school of piety was too abstract: he wished his penitents to meditate on the Immutability, the Infinity, of God: even when he became "Christocentric," it was rather on the "inner life" (the *etats*) of Jesus and Mary that they were to concentrate. The agonized crucifixes of Spain never found a home in France, on its way to a rather chill classicism (against which the sentimentalism of a generation ago was in revolt). Perhaps the author is almost too erudite and has no room for "pictures" of Bérulle's associates, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Francis of Sales, Olier, Condren, Coton and the rest. We feel the book to be somewhat of a tremendous monograph, and, as such, it must necessarily be read by any Bérullian.

C. C. MARTINDALE

LOUDUN: POSSESSION OR NEUROSIS?

The Devils of Loudun, by Aldous Huxley (Chatto and Windus 18s).

THIS BOOK is bound to be judged differently by those who disbelieve in the existence of a spiritual world; by those who admit its existence but not that of evil spirits; and again, by those who admit, or deny, that spirits, good or bad, can influence or even control men and women. The jacket rightly says that Mr. Huxley "makes his ideas the more challenging and forceful by relating them to real events and historical characters." The ideas come first. He sets them forth very fairly: "possession," whether by evil spirits or discarnate souls if not "self-contradictory" nor to be ruled out *a priori* as "a relic of ancient superstition." At one end, he recognizes that Christianity never has been Manichaean and appositely quotes *Satan* (*Études Carmélitaines*: 1948); and at the other he welcomes the enormous advances made in modern times by psychology, and admits extra-sensory perception and psycho-kinesis at least as proving that "the old notion of a completely water-tight soul is untenable." We think, however, that he is inaccurate when saying that the Church *prescribes* four tests enabling us to distinguish "true possession from fraud or the symptoms of disease." The Church never begins from, or dogmatizes about, phenomena. St. Thomas insists that miracles may be indistinguishable from portents save by their circumstances: the Church always starts from "moral antecedents and consequences," "hard to assess," as Mr. Huxley says they well may be. We recommend the late Father Thurston's *Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (1952) and *Une Stigmatisée de nos jours* (Theresa Neumann), by P. Sivek, S.J. (1950). Mr. Huxley's ideas are probably known: here in an appendix he discusses various modern "Grace-substitutes"—harmful methods of self-transcendence—drug-, sex-, herd-intoxication: but we think there is too much philosophizing in the book itself, which we would have preferred to be straight history. As for the history, there are three themes—(1) the diabolic possession of Soeur Jeanne des Anges and her Ursuline sisters, (2) the career of Abbé Grandier, and (3) the role of Fr. Surin. None of the documentation seems to us trustworthy, save much of the autobiography of Jeanne and the works of Fr. Surin himself (though these have, as usual, been too often "improved" by editors). Nothing else of contemporary writing seems to us reliable; it could not but be partisan—for or against Grandier, Catholics or Protestants, Richelieu, bishops, Capuchins and Jesuits. But Mr. Huxley uses later authors of various value, as, for instance, Miss M. Murray, obsessed by her theory of a pre-Christian fertility-cult surviving almost everywhere. He condescends to Lea on Sacerdotal Celibacy. Dr. Legué (School of Charcot) contains genuine material, but Michelet, "inaccurate but extremely

lively," ought not to be used about anything Catholic. The *Cloud of Unknowing* is inevitably referred to, but so is Poulain and also Bremond (consistently misaccentuated Brémond). Frankly, we should treat contemporary gossip about Grandier much as we should Suetonius about Tiberius. But alas, Mr. Huxley dwells (we had almost said "gloats") upon Grandier's sins, and dreams over what went on in the Abbé's corrupt mind and in those of his victims. This is not history. He puts forward negatives: "of the existence at Loudun . . . of any genuine spiritual religion . . . there is no evidence." And he extends this negative to practically all France. Yet it not only was a generation of great Saints, truly holy bishops, priests and nuns, all exerting a wide influence, but it does give evidence of a whole world of good and simple souls, discoverable though not self-advertising. Mr. Huxley does quote the "mystic" servant-girl, *la bonne Armelle*, but it is rather irritating to find she is offered as pointing "to the same conclusion, namely, that the phenomenal self is underlain by a Pure Ego or Atman, which is of the same nature as the divine Ground of all being."

Only on page 108 do the Ursulines of Loudun appear with their Prioress, Jeanne des Anges, a hunchback, aged twenty-five, gradually (we are assured) obsessed by the idea of Grandier almost *because* (Mr. Huxley thinks) of his enigmatic reputation: "What wonder if she too fell in love with the delicious monster!" She wrote begging him to be her own and the Sisters' spiritual director. He refused. Her worship turned into hatred. She resolved to drag him off his pinnacle. Meanwhile her convent, which had been imbued with "mystical" ideas, and also had been playing "practical jokes" and engineering "ghosts," became hysterical, and exorcism was resorted to. Mr. Huxley describes Jeanne's mental processes so exactly that you might almost suppose that his was the fevered sprite which inhabited her. Anyway, after prolonged exorcism, she declared that it was Grandier who had bewitched her. Up to this point Mr. Huxley rightly explains the state of mind then prevalent with regard to sorcery and witchcraft, though acknowledging that Jeanne may have been right when saying, later on, that her memory of these years was confused. But there follows a description of the arrest, the trials, and finally the burning alive of Grandier, in horrible detail. We cannot profess to disentangle, in the account of this episode, facts from contemporary scandal and myth-making and the author's periodical bent for romantic sensationalism. It seems admitted by all that Grandier and Jeanne never met and that he never was involved in diabolism, heavily though he paid for his sins. But the "devils" survived him. The Jesuits were now ordered to undertake the exorcisms, despite the distaste of their General Vitelleschi and much local disapproval of Fr. Surin's being one of the team. He was certainly austere and holy, but an extremist, preoccupied with

"special graces," and above all sick and it would seem neurotic. He was still violent in his physical methods of treating Jeanne, specially confided to him, though gentler in his spiritual direction. At last, touched beyond endurance by the sight of her mental sufferings and bodily phenomena (all of them paralleled in Fr. Thurston's book by hysterical cases), he asked that *he* might suffer what she did. For some time he did so, to the point of believing himself damned; yet intermittently (perhaps all the time) his mind was very lucid and he wrote admirable pages on the spiritual life. He seems an extreme example of the co-existence of contraries in a man's soul. But little of his work has been fully edited and no one seems to have dared to write a critical biography of this tormented man, inserting him organically into his no less contradictory period. Mr. Huxley speaks very kindly of him, but even he does not appreciate the ecstatically happy and peaceful close of Surin's life. As for Jeanne's grotesque pilgrimage to Annecy, her reception by Richelieu, the king and queen and great personages ecclesiastical and lay, we have no room to write, nor of the pseudo-stigma of her left hand. She died in 1665 and in 1772 her convent was suppressed. In conclusion, we add that while the Church approves of exorcism under the most rigid precautions, she has never commended the violent methods that were in vogue for a space among Catholics in regard of the possessed, or (chiefly) Protestants who for a while went mad about witches.

THE REHABILITATION OF SAINTS

Quartet in Heaven, by Sheila Kaye-Smith (Cassell 1958).

WHILE NOT DENYING that we wistfully look back to her *Green Apple Harvest*, *Little England*, *Sussex Gorse*, and the rest, we are far from under-valuing Miss Kaye-Smith's studies of four women; three of them are canonized, while we pray that the heroicity of Mother Connelly's virtues may some day find official recognition. The authoress says frankly that she approaches her subjects first as human persons, not as Saints, and she is right. A Decree of 1920 concerning the Cause of St. Antonio Gianelli says that when enquiring into "heroicity" of virtues one must "come down from the region of uniform and immutable ideas and place oneself among real men and watch them acting in human ways. The very beauty of the Church is defaced, if a man succeeds in imagining that all the Saints should be constructed or portrayed according to one identical formula." Had we but space to quote all this part of the Decree! We confess to doubting whether the chapter on Cornelia Connelly was needed, not only because her life has been so fully written (and is being, we think,

re-written), but because charity has here soft-pedalled the appalling trials she endured not only from her husband but from Catholics too. It required courage too to write yet more about St. Thérèse of Lisieux, about whom a book "must appear almost every month": but not a little is done here to rehabilitate M. Martin, who was a true Christian though (we still think) rather a foolish father. This chapter shows how difficult it is to translate the elusive word *petit* and how the "Little Way" is not an adequate rendering. "Simple" may be nearer—but how odd is common talk! "Mon vieux" and "Mon petit" may mean almost the same thing: so may "Je lui dit rondement" and "Je lui dit carrément." Perhaps Miss Kaye-Smith forgets that the Spain of St. Teresa and of our own day can be appallingly cold: St. Teresa must have been *transie de froid* as terribly as St. Thérèse: I am quite sure that Teresa would, in our times, have admitted clocks into her convents, not only hour-glasses, and, in short, have wished that her nuns should do what she would have done, not merely what she did. I cannot imagine what she would have thought of the mausoleum under which her little daughter now lies crushed amid electric candles: were not the bombs that ruined so much of Lisieux rather misdirected?

Even when writing about St. Catherine Fiesca Adorna ("Catherine of Genoa") Miss Kaye-Smith had the monumental work of Baron F. von Hügel at the back of her, not that she is the victim of his views any more than she is of the contemporary writers Vernazza and Marabotto. There are really two books to be written about St. Catherine; one, which is here outlined, about her most remarkable "human" life; the other, about her doctrine of Purgatory, which does not reach us first-hand (any more than Blessed Angela of Foligno's revelations do). Of this Miss Kaye-Smith deliberately says hardly anything: she is *not* discussing the preternatural element in these lives. But even St. Catherine had to use metaphors and spoke of the soul, as of its own volition, "plunging" into Purgatory, whereas it simply finds itself in a certain state—of intolerable pain because it is still unlike God, and of incomparable joy because it is becoming more and more fit for union with Him. Catherine surely sees, rightly, that the soul does not remember specific sins—how could it? It has no more pictorial, numerical memory: but could she be right in supposing (if indeed she, and not her scribes, said she did) that the soul is not aware that it *is* in Purgatory? But Miss Kaye-Smith is much helped by her knowledge of Protestant "conversions," e.g., Bunyan's and James Weller's, and can both do homage to these and contrast them with the "grace abounding" which issued into a Catholic's "change of heart."

She knows too the early Peruvian background of St. Rose of Lima, far the most difficult subject that she tackles. This girl is bound to

baffle any English reader. Here indeed we have to disentangle metaphor from concrete fact: it is impressive that even her directors knew quite well how to explain when her visions were "imaginative" ("imaginary" suggests to us that they were *unreal*, which they certainly were not). Despite her appalling penances, her skilful work went far to keep her family on its financial feet—we remember that the Genoese ecstatic was treasurer of a huge hospital and her accounts were never a penny wrong. Possibly the most important part of this book consists in the "Notes on the Nature of Sanctity." The author, like Fr. Thurston, Fr. Sivek and others, confronts the fact that authentic ecstasies perhaps always suffer, at least at first, from neurotic symptoms. It can be asked whether God chooses an abnormally sensitive person as the recipient of His abnormal graces; or whether (which we feel more probable) the invasion of special graces create disturbances at first throughout the human complex. No matter. Nearly all the great ecstasies seem to quiet down as they become mature. A peaceful glow replaces the shattering flash. And again, sacrifice as such does not imply suffering, though human solidarity in Christ almost always involves expiation. But this subject is to be sought among professional theologians (who are also historians) than in a brave, reverent, at times humorous, always honest biographer like Miss Kaye-Smith.

SHORTER NOTICES

Queen Victoria and Her Prime Ministers, by Algernon Cecil (Eyre and Spottiswoode 25s).

ONE FEELS this to be an unsatisfactory book. A survey of Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers which is more than a series of purely personal assessments is bound to get entangled in political history. Then the separate studies must either overlap or, by ignoring events referred to in other sections, be very incomplete. The result in this case is a book which a reader who has only a slight acquaintance with the facts and persons of Victoria's long reign will probably find rather dull and confusing. Those who have a fair knowledge of the period may be interested in the interpretation of men and happenings made by a man who seems to consider the mid-nineteenth century as a culmination from which all later developments in the constitution and in society have been a decline.

The skilful writing, with its long carefully moulded sentences, and the trifling amount of new material, do not, however, compensate for the lack of balance in dealing with subjects already covered by a large number of books. Lives of some of these statesmen on a smaller scale than the pious many-volumed official biographies would have been a

useful addition to the student's library, but this book will not fill that gap.

The portraits are well produced and the volume, apart from a few irritating slips which escaped the proof readers, well printed.

M. D. R. LEYS

An Experience of Critics, by Christopher Fry (Perpetua 7s 6d).

THIS IS A BOOK whose calibre is evasively difficult to assess. Equipped with a variety of Ronald Searle cartoons, an equable prologue by Alec Guinness, a not-so-gentle diatribe by Christopher Fry, and some mellow addenda by eight dramatic critics, the volume appears to stake no claim on the homage of our higher seriousness. But this first innocuous impression does not allow for Mr. Fry, who swings from the boughs of fantasy to the trunk of meaning with a rapid graceful motion which is apt to bewilder the merely rational mind.

To return to my original epithet from gunnery, it is as if one expected to hear the pop of percussion-caps or paper-pellets, and found oneself, instead, bombarded by howitzers, with Mr. Fry doing all the really heavy firing.

His chief contention seems to be that critics do not measure a work by its author's intention but seek to apply some totally alien *a priori* canon; and in this assertion Mr. Fry is often right. But what Mr. Fry does not consider is that the better critic cannot be concerned with an author and his value in splendid isolation, aspiring as he does to estimate their worth in the scale of literature past and present. And to do this, he must address himself not only to the single author's purpose, but to the purpose and achievement of those who assayed a task of some resemblance.

The Shorter Cambridge Medieval History: 2 Vols., Vol. I, The Later Roman Empire to the Twelfth Century; Vol. II, The Twelfth Century to the Renaissance, by C. W. Previt -Orton (Cambridge University Press 55s).

THE PUBLISHERS say this work is intended for the unprofessional as well as the professional historian; Mr. Grierson, who completed the work of the late Mr. Previt -Orton, says it is intended to appeal to the general reader. Possibly no distinction between the unprofessional historian and the general reader is meant, but the contrast between these rather vague entities serves to bring out the faults and merits of the book.

If by the general reader is meant an educated man with an intelligent interest in history the appeal of the book to him is doubtful. Though

scholarly, reasonably well written, and far from being a mere synopsis of the larger Cambridge Medieval History, the book lacks literary unity and the style is not sufficiently attractive to repay the labour of reading.

On the other hand the unprofessional historian, the amateur of history, the teacher, will find the book very useful. It incorporates as far as possible the results of recent research. The illustrations are a most valuable feature. Unfortunately some of them are far from clear—the “Ideal lay-out for an abbey,” on page 287, needs a powerful magnifying glass to be followed and some of the reproductions of manuscripts cannot be read with the naked eye. The maps and genealogical tables are good. The publishers have not seen fit to give any kind of bibliography. This would have been very valuable to the unprofessional historian. It would be churlish to end on a note of criticism and it must be said that the admirable format of the book, the large number of excellent illustrations, and its sound scholarship, make it an inexpensive bargain.

Monastic Sites from the Air, by David Knowles and J. K. St. Joseph (Cambridge University Press 55s).

THIS MAGNIFICENT BOOK is to be the first in a series of “Cambridge Air Surveys.” Not only are the plates often of extreme beauty, but they witness to the incalculable amount of beauty destroyed by the Dissolution and afterwards. It is well known that observation from the air reveals all sorts of foundations and constructional design now underground and never to be guessed at from the level. This is made clear in instances where almost nothing remains above the soil. A very good introduction shows us how firm yet flexible was the planning of those monasteries and churches which to a Voltaire and others appeared monstrous and chaotic. The introduction shows how logical was the lay-out of a great monastery, and also how varied and practical were its annexes, so to say—its workshops, hospitals, schools, guest-houses, refuges for the poor, and so forth. Undoubtedly there were monasteries and nunneries which grew rich out of proportion to their utility: but the Dissolution occurred for the sake of money-getting without regard to service rendered, and no wonder that whole populations were smothered under “the blanket of the dark.” But the book is not a controversial or apologetic one, though its interest is not only scientific but humane. It is sad that flying restrictions, weather conditions, and inaccessibility caused the omission of several sites of high interest: but the book does not aim at being an exhaustive catalogue, but of placing before our eyes what by

other methods would remain unseen. The letterpress is quite adequate, though kept to a minimum. We can feel sure that future volumes will preserve the very high standard of this one.

Men against Humanity, by Gabriel Marcel (Harvill Press 18s).

WHAT M. MARCEL SETS OUT TO DO in this book is to produce an indictment of practically all his philosophical colleagues for a new form of *trahison des clercs*—their persistent yielding to the temptation to generalize, to talk in abstractions, and so to encourage that mass-mentality which has been responsible for some of the greatest enormities of history. It would be easy to put the case for the defence, to point out that it is impossible to talk for any length of time on any subject, let alone philosophy, without making use of abstractions: it would be easy to show that M. Marcel's own indictment is not free of generalizations; but it is more profitable to listen to him and to learn to appreciate "the true philosopher's urgent inner need to grasp reality in its concreteness." For we all, philosophers or not, are in continuing need of being reminded that what matters, in the end, is the welfare of human beings who may never legitimately be sacrificed to a theory, an ideology.

M. Marcel's mistake is to talk of philosophers as if they were a special kind of human beings. But his indictment lies against all men and women. It may be true that "the philosopher runs the risk of cutting himself off, in some sense, from life, and of little by little, without becoming aware of it, substituting for life a realm of thought which is quite his own . . .": but the ensuing indifference to the human tragedy is a moral failure, not a mere intellectual attitude. It may be true to say that philosophers are more liable to selfishness than any other human beings; perhaps that is why they take up philosophical speculation instead of doing a "useful" job. But for all that his book was worth writing and is well worth reading, with patience and honesty. As Professor Mackinnon says, in his Foreword: "His book demands to be read as a summons to *exetasis biou*." It is not an easy book to read; but it is instinct with all the humanity and sympathy of a philosopher who is more at home in the market-place than in the cave.

St. Benedict Joseph Labre, by Agnes de la Gorce. Translated by Rosemary Sheed (Sheed and Ward 12s 6d).

AGNES DE LA GORCE has written, for the first time, we think, a life of this Saint that makes him intelligible. For she does not suggest that he was equally inspired, and true to inspiration, from the outset. He was brought up in a spirituality which was not Jansenist, but rigorous in the extreme and liable to create every scruple. His youth

was dominated by the doctrine of the fewness of the saved. He tried again and again to enter the austere monastery that he could find, but always developed melancholia and came out. He did not set forth with the intention of leading a life of one pilgrimage after another, but left France for Italy having heard of several strict monasteries into which he might be admitted. His life did in fact issue into a series of pilgrimages to shrines, when, that is, he did not stay in Rome. What remained permanent was the wish for total renunciation of self, but we have always thought (and this book seems to justify our having done so) that it was only gradually that the love of God (and especially of the Holy Eucharist) replaced in him the fear of going to hell. Yet it is paradoxical that it was for long obscure whether he received Holy Communion at all. It was finally ascertained that he did so, but very early, and in different churches, such was his desire for self-effacement.

In a second edition various misprints will need correction, e.g., on page 120, note 2, *La Louvesc* has shrunk into *Louves*. But the marvellous portrait by Cavallucci ought to supersede any other pictures of the Saint.

Don Camillo and the Prodigal Son, by Giovanni Guareschi. Translated by Francis Frenaye (Gollancz 10s 6d).

IT IS NOTORIOUSLY RARE for an author to write a "sequel" as good as his previous book; but after all, *The Little World of Don Camillo* was not a completed story, but a series of enchanting episodes which instantly fascinated all readers and which could be added to indefinitely. The Communist mayor, Peppone, and his friend and enemy the priest Camillo, are as deliciously drawn as ever; but alas, the bitter and destructive element of Italian politics seems more harshly emphasized, and the iniquity of the "Party" methods is undisguised. In his little preface the author shows that he fears that the priest or mayor, and even the Crucifix (who speaks less often in this volume than in the former one) may have given offence. We assure him that we have not met or heard of even one who has been offended! In fact, in an article in this review about Père Lamy, it is suggested that the Crucified spoke entirely in terms of Camillo's conscience. Here the author says it speaks in terms of *his* conscience. We can but congratulate him if his and Camillo's thus coincide! The translation is beyond praise; so are the deliriously delightful drawings of the little angels, good and bad: seldom have we seen so much expressed with such extreme economy of line.

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